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STUDIES IN
LIFE AND LITERATURE

Charles T. Lusted

Fred E. Baker

24/8/99

Aberavon

STUDIES IN LIFE AND
LITERATURE

a

Studies in Life and Literature

WITH INTRODUCTORY SONNETS

BY
CHARLES T. LUSTED

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NOTE

THE Author regrets that Lord Tennyson—
of whom special reference has been made
as a living poet—died whilst this work was
in the press.

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PROLOGUE

ERRATA IN PROLOGUE.

3rd line, for "reach" read "gain."

4th line, omit "gain the."

You pass into strange hands, and leave this place
Of sweet familiar ease, where giants stand
Upon the shelves and speak to me, by grace
Of the eternal God. All I demand
In your behalf, is justice ; with no trace
Of bitterness or favour keen or bland.

INTELLECTUAL WASTE

A

THE human mind o'er all things sits a queen
With godlike power invested. It can thread
The vast intricacies of thought, and tread
The rigid path of reason with a mien
And will, full-fronted to the death, and wean
The truth from mighty doubts and fears, and shed
Its lasting light upon the glorious head,
And face, and form of knowledge—ever green.

Who wastes this living force forsakes his best,
And is contented with the soul of brutes,—
Whose general wish is food, and ease, and rest.
The highest branches bear the richest fruits.
Great men are only made on labour's crest ;
'Tis better to be fools than useless mutes.

STUDIES IN LIFE AND LITERATURE



INTELLECTUAL WASTE.

I know no evil under the sun so great as the abuse of the understanding.—STEELE.

Every human creature, idiots and extraordinary cases excepted, is endowed with talents, which, if rightly directed, would show him to be apt, adroit, intelligent and acute in the walk for which his organisation especially fitted him.—GODWIN.

I do not wonder at what men suffer, but I do wonder often at what they lose.—RUSKIN.

IF an ordinary man is to compete with his fellow-mortals with honour to himself, and contend successfully against a jarring world, his capacity and its tendency for labour must, more than at any time during past periods, be generously respected, accurately measured, and his profession chosen with exquisite care. It must be the profession of his natural tastes, and fully adapted to them. Any other will fail either to make a man happy or very useful. The environment of many men is

radically, if not criminally, wrong. To render the evil more acute and bitter, there is for the majority, no feasible way of reversing their circumstances or accidents in life. Their die has been cast, perhaps by another, but it cannot be revoked. It is too late. Life, and the duties of life, the necessity of constant labour to support his paradise—his home—renders it utterly impossible for him to renounce his present profession, and follow another more suitable to his nature, knowledge, and tastes. The cruel Fates have ruled otherwise, and the victim must plod on as cheerfully as his erroneous professional life will permit, and his exasperated spirits allow. If married and has children he will be wise to gird up the strength of his heart, shake off his discontent, forget all about nature and sentiment, and do his utmost to adapt his mistaken profession to his not unbendable faculties; for he cannot change his mode of life, and manner of gaining his livelihood, with 'bairns and wife' depending upon him for comfort, support, and bread. With the entirely free man it is different. He can, if it please him, follow his own sweet will right into the jaws of death, at leisure. But no man with any feeling of affection would plunge his poor helpless innocents into poverty, distress, and misery by an unfavourable reversal of professional life.

In the foregoing remarks, I allude to strictly intellectual professions and intellectual men. With the average working man any method or class of labour, so long as not superior to his talents, adapts itself readily, even naturally, to his hand. The labouring man, in much of his work, requires little skill and less thought. His mental faculties are scarcely ever called into activity. Their exertion is not necessary. A farmer does not engage a man to think, but to plough, to dig, and to perform general farming work. He can whistle if he choose, but must not continually pause in his labour to examine geological specimens in the earth he turns over with the plough, or the spade.

The intellectual being may sometimes change his profession with security, safety, and ease ; but the circumstances must be very propitious to effect this happy change. Still, it is not common, and cannot be recommended for general practice or adoption. Indeed, the professions themselves often debar a change, when it could be accomplished with excellent success and ready despatch. A military man could not easily transform himself into a parson ; a parson into a barrister ; a barrister into a physician, with even a few years of manhood on his brow. True, this transformation has been achieved many times. Many good

parsons, and indeed splendid bishops, have worn the sword in their youth—aye, and age too, and have been none the worse. But this exchange is every day becoming more difficult. The rudiments of any profession in our day must be well grounded and learnt; and that man would be in a novel position who sat down to study them professionally on the wrong side of thirty, and, in some cases, of twenty. We cannot condemn or deprecate this method, for it is excellent, and is admirably adapted to meet the necessary requirements of modern professions. Youth learns and remembers more readily than Age. And if men are to be successful, or to shine, or even to be prosperous in their professions, they must be embraced and mastered in the years preceding manhood. The candidates for every profession are many, and they who have the most knowledge, or, in some cases, *the most impudence*, will survive and become the oracles of their little world.

The radical source and system of the danger lies in the fatal mistake of presenting a youth to the wrong profession—the profession repulsive to his feelings, and not in any way adapted to his intellectual forces. It is a common fault but a painful one. His life has generally almost reached its climax, professionally and often socially, before the grave error is discovered by the responsible

authority. No matter who deserves or does not deserve censure, it is of no avail when a lad's life is practically wrecked, and his happiness in a profession virtually ruined. 'Of course he will recover,' or 'he is too great a fool for any useful purpose,' is the argument of the selfish and the stoic. Doubtless, like a brave lad, or wise man, he will settle gravely down to his destiny. But why cause pain when it can be avoided? When the professional stages are past, it is too late both for repentance and reversion or even cold selfishness. The victim will probably do the work of his profession excellently, but not with that ready eagerness and sustained delight with which he would perform the work of the profession congenial to his constitutional tastes. When a man follows a profession distasteful to him, intellectual waste and degeneration will ensue; and all the forces in Christendom could not arrest the punishment inflicted by Nature, unless it was the force of Love urging a total renunciation of glorious hopes, and pressing the lofty necessity of manful struggle against circumstance and error. To be prosperous, to be well, to be free, he must embrace his present repulsive profession with the tenacity of a drowning man, who clutches at anything to retain life and save from utter death. It is his only remaining course. It may bend, but will not break.

This life-long misery and wretchedness, through adopting a mistaken profession, can only be spared a man by respecting the tendencies of his youth. It is true that many, indeed most lads, show no particular taste for any one distinct profession; but as a generality these indifferent lads have no strong feelings or keen sensibilities. They can adapt themselves to anything; no profession comes amiss; all are alike, so long as they are remunerative and bring a spice of happiness. This indifference is developed by a dull nature, general ignorance, and intellectual thinness. A man of this type may even possess a great capacity for amassing wealth, but he exhibits his mental weakness and little nature, in that he is careless and indifferent as to the method of securing it. His mode appears to him as the best, because he is used to it.

But he who has no brains, except for wealth, selfishness, happiness, luxury, ease, is a poor mortal, and displays an alarming degree of intellectual atrophy, decay, and waste. When all the energies are spent solely and entirely for self, there can be no genuine greatness of mind, or real mental worth. A man without a single noble purpose in life is lost to the best in the universe of humanity. There is nothing wastes the intellectual forces so disastrously as lust of self, or greed of gold. They are two false, hideous idols

when pampered and worshipped as the two sole divinities on God's earth. Like that old Egyptian god demolished at Alexandria they contain nothing but vermin; and they who fall down and worship them are not worshippers of wood but of the devil, and of horrible, filthy, loathsome vermin. They are satisfied; they are happy; and who would be so unkind and cruel as to dash the swinging censer in their grinning faces, so as to break their idols, and henceforth render them dissatisfied and unhappy? If these vermin worshippers could comprehend the extent of their selfishness and folly when discovered, it would be granting them a kindness, but otherwise it would be inflicting a useless stab, a stab neither curative nor mortal. There is hope for most men, but for a selfish man, and a gold man, it has dwindled down to a microscopic atom. It shines sickly and feebly, like a dying star swung into a distant infinity of space, scarcely discoverable by any human or mechanical means. But can we expect nobleness from selfishness? I might with the same spirit ask—Can we expect generosity from an enraged lion which has a fancy for the taste of human flesh? Both stand relatively in the same position. They will serve their own ends; let others pipe for justice or assistance as loudly as they may.

Many who do not love the labour of thinking, are under the erroneous impression that a man can change his profession at will—that there is nothing easier. They apply this particularly to literature. Because it is *merely* writing they imagine any man, with two-penny worth of brains, can transform himself any moment into a full-blown author. To obtain one's living by literature is nothing more than a holiday jaunt compared with other methods of employment. Never was an idea so foolish and insane. Did the making of books merely depend upon the writing of any rubbish, we should have pyramids of them erected in every street, not for sale only, but for monuments of recklessness, ignorance, stupidity, and folly. Too many books are actually written on this wild, thoughtless no-principle, under our present universal method of authorship; and may the Fates preserve mankind from yielding any further unmerited enjoyment. A genuine book requires infinitely more labour than the mere writing, which is nothing more than the mechanical part. Who is to do the thinking? Who is to manufacture that which creates a man a genius? Who is to *tare* the mighty thoughts from the human brain? Not the weak fool, or the man who trifles with literature and fancies it consists of nothing but the

writing. That is but the dress which bodies forth herculean studies, perhaps of many years. Language is nothing more than the drapery of the author's mind. It is his difficult, arduous, invisible thinking shaped into visible and luminous words. That process is left to the last moment. But the mental struggle has been ceaseless and unflagging. It has often brought a man prematurely to his grave. But his books which cost him so dearly, what of them? They have survived his mortality. They mark his genius and his labour. They are his monuments of fame and worth for all time.

Literature, of all professions, is not the one to be undertaken lightly. A man cannot enter her darksome portals and throw back the veil hanging over the mystery of things, fresh from the turmoil of the city or the field, uninitiated, untutored, unlearned. Literature demands intense study, close application, huge courage, splendid energy, indomitable perseverance; and he who is in no humour, or is too idle to wrestle with a great task, will never become a good disciple or a passable devotee. The man who jumps into literature without preparation is an alien, and commits sacrilege in the courts of her beautiful temple where her noble sons of genius rest in assured ease. Any profession is no profession. To rush headlong

from one to another savours decidedly of insanity. But to leap from the counting-house into the saloon or garret of the commonwealth of letters, having made no higher study than that of ledgers, is a madman's trick, a butt to crack jokes upon. a piece of folly, or, to be more correct, a piece of idiotcy that is everywhere common and which cannot be too loudly condemned.

Because a man has a taste for literature, a love for books, and has read half-a-dozen standard works by the literary giants, it is no proper or satisfactory reason that he should write a book himself; neither, unless he has talents and gifts tending that way, is he justified in sending forth a volume of prose or verse for critics to snap at, while less wiser men content themselves with a grunt or a growl.

Literature requires more natural genius, more inborn knowledge, more professional love, more depth and largeness of soul, and what transcends many talents and much genius, more preparation, labour, and study than any other profession throughout the length and breadth of the wide earth. An author's sensibility should be exquisite; his capacity for learning great; his memory stupendous and all-embracing; his insight into men and things keen; and his judgment nicely balanced and correct; his observation

large and unceasing ; his mind should spring from the giant mind of Nature, and must be tutored by study into a state of intellectual greatness and superiority. Of course, every man, be he author or artisan, will suffer from errors of judgment, as is natural by our imperfect constitution and limited environment ; but an author, more than any man, should seek to perfect his knowledge in every way possible. When labour can remove an obstacle, or sweep away a mystery, it should not be accounted the smallest reason for insufficiency and non-completeness. Much intellectual waste is permitted among authors by their indifference or indolence. Many will not undertake the necessary duty of seeking for facts, conclusions, and whole truths ; neither will they make an effort to penetrate shallow difficulties, and make their dull vision clear because, perhaps, two hours' labour would be incurred, and they would rather go to a dinner-party and be bored by lisping Miss Potts. They are satisfied with limitations, being too idle to work for entireties. They call labour a sacrifice, and a waste of time ; but no true labour sacrifices time or worth. It is an increase of wisdom, knowledge, success, honesty, fame.

The intellectual waste of some of our great authors, or of those who could be great by an

effort, is tremendous, is mortifying, alarming, even painful, when we consider the calibre, the capacity, the fulness, the grandeur of their magnificent minds. I do not mean waste through smallness of work completed. That would be both idle and foolish; for some men cannot work with any degree of comfort and satisfaction to themselves, or produce any great quantity of writing daily in a manner worthy of their pens. Indëed, no author who has any thought for his health, or any respect for his reputation—and none despise the latter—should actually labour more than a very few hours daily. I do not assert he cannot, but that he should not. Many authors have laboured continuously, but at a great cost. They have suffered much bodily pain; have engendered diseases for life; in some instances have lost their mental faculties, and they could not have been robbed of anything more precious to them or their families; and many have sunk into the grave in the early years of their life, and of their growing fame.

Had fortune been kinder to young Thomas Chatterton he would not have poisoned himself like a common felon afraid of coming circumstances. He, perhaps, would have lived to have talked with Johnson, Burke, Goldsmith, Reynolds, and Garrick, at the Club; and *might* have sat next to the effeminate Horace Walpole at an Academy

dinner, and conversed with him, very proudly on old poetry and the fine Arts. Another solemn scene to call to memory, is Southey wandering in his library fondling his books, in the last sad years when his mind was gone. Day after day, month after month, year after year, he made books to support his family. Working manfully, essentially, but affectionately, he was one of the noblest men in England. His home was everything; he cared for little outside it, and troubled himself less. He laboured much, but suffered heavily. His penalty was severe, and perhaps, if we respected the apparent cruelty of Nature more, and raved about her beauty less, was just. For no man can abuse Nature and her gifts, without Nature taking, not *rèvenge*, but justice.

Neither, when speaking of the intellectual waste of some of our great authors, do I mean waste through indolence. That favourite vice of authors does not injure the greatness or the reputation of their already published work; but in the progress of time it will detract from their fame, and may punish their bodies and cripple their minds. It may sound paradoxical, but an author often wastes more intellect in working than in idleness. He becomes so satisfied and prodigal of his time and genius, that he sacrifices both in the production of insignificant works which should be known

to the world as *Lazy Literature*. These watery productions, if not sheltered beneath the mantle of great names, would meet with little sale and small commendation. It is far more necessary for the true and accepted author of genius to be always at his best, than for those who rank so infinitely below him. The accepted author has a reputation to sustain; the non-accepted has none to sustain, or to lose. Instead, he has one to win; and if he does not advance he may take large comfort in the knowledge that he cannot recede.

With the known author of genius it is entirely different. *He has no right to publish an indifferent book*. When he is guilty of performing that sordid criminal feat, he deceives the public by passing forgeries and base coin into circulation. His name, vulgarly, spells money. It always sells a book, however poor; and if by his former works he has honestly displayed to the public that he is a great writer; by afterwards publishing one of no merit he virtually becomes a highway robber; but one who robs with more than the exquisite taste and gentlemanly habits of a Macheath, and without his personality being visible or compromised. By the liberty of the English press any great author has a full and independent right to publish any worthless book of his workmanship with his name on the title-page; but if he were honest he would recognise

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that he has but little moral right to throw a worthless book into the market, shouting professionally through a thousand book shops and as many papers, 'Buy, buy!'—chuckling and whispering at the same moment to himself,—'But there is nothing in the book worth buying.' By writing and publishing on this felonious system he abuses his own understanding, insults the public, and is in danger of corrupting both. He wastes time, talents, gifts, energies, not of himself alone but of all his readers.

If a great actor produces a bad play the public can take a swift and sure revenge. Few must suffer, but they save the many. It is the same with a mechanic who executes a wretched piece of workmanship for us—we never employ him again. But for a great author with a trashy book, there is no just or satisfactory mode of punishment whatever. If you abstain from purchasing his book your neighbour will not do so. It is even doubtful if you would abstain, for you, like others, have a very keen desire to be acquainted with his stupidity and folly. The public will always buy, and buy eagerly, any book produced by an accepted author, whether good, bad, or indifferent. The only punishments for this literary criminal are stinging criticisms, which, if he is affected by them, are perhaps sufficient torture and full punishment

for his deception and vice. But even critics are sometimes timid, and stand abashed at a great name, and straightway falter in their duty; and this at a time when there was never more need or urgency to speak the truth and shame—not the devil—that follows—but the man of genius—the author of ability—the recipient of true fame—who had the audacity to deceive the public with his vapid and inane book.

But authors are not the only offenders. They do not stand alone. Their position is not novel. It is peculiar to the entire race of humanity. There is intellectual waste in every professional community, or non-professional. Indeed this latter class is incorrigible. Its members are idlers; and one of the most radical abusers of the understanding—one of the most terrible destructors of talent—is idleness. To allow any art or cunning of the hand, or any gift of the mind, to drop into decay, is to suffer degeneration. It is offering an insult to Nature, who hates the idle creature as the gravest and most deliberate fault in her wide system of liberty. To govern a country badly, to teach people falsehood, to write a book with no ray of talent discoverable, or even to keep accounts wretchedly, is to abuse the intellectual faculties which are part of the great system of Nature. Anything done wrongfully, in the face of light, and

better knowledge, is a flagrant and utter waste of superior gifts. But to remain idle altogether is to offer the mind to the devil's axe, who will secure the forfeited property in due time.

Idleness is indefensible and almost brutish, no matter what the rank or position of the dilapidated human creature may be. Indeed the sloven and the dandified society man are very much alike in intellect. They both have foreheads like chickens, and conversation like goslings. They could scarcely be otherwise, considering the lower attributes of the animal, of which they have a very full share, and exceedingly well developed. It takes a great deal to make a mind, but very little to destroy one.

If a man will not break away from his unlovely habits it is because he will not exert his moral energies in the right direction to do so, or because he loves his darling vices too well to allow them for one moment to take a holiday, or escape his tenacious grasp. That man who is incapable of correcting his intellectual abuses—who desires their removal, but cannot begin the difficult task—had better take a man in pay to beat them out of his body, or his mind, or wherever they take their rise, than grant them full licence to become chronic. It is nobler to suffer pain than to permit waste. The former is

a natural evil which afflicts the gentlest, the loveliest, and purest of mankind. The latter is an acquired one, which is centred in selfishness and pampered in a luxurious ease of idleness and indifference.

Waste of any kind is a deplorable evil, but when intellectual, a terrible one. If licensed by a great name it becomes a hundred times more vitiated and base. To throw it off requires strength, but he who cannot, will not, or is too timid and pusillanimous to labour for a good and noble issue is not worthy of it. He would carry his honours awkwardly, and with an ill grace.

Intellectual greatness is the highest and most honourable dignity among men, and undoubtedly the most lasting. Kingdoms, empires, commonwealths, are shook to their foundations, conquered, overthrown, enslaved, destroyed; nations degenerate into servile, weak, or insignificant states; cities are defaced and robbed of their architectural splendours, lie in ruins and are desolate; battles are fought and are only remembered by the number slain; but the glorious liberty, the transcendent beauty, and the superhuman efforts of a great intellect, survive all things, and clothe an illustrious and deserving name with a halo of national, universal, and immortal glory, which increases in fineness by an intelligent admiration,

and grows in lustre with the overlapping ages. But intellectual waste has no future but scorn, contempt, and a just obloquy so long as remembered. It is fortunate if it enjoys a speedy but well-merited oblivion. Indeed, this odious crime is best punished with a deathless silence—understood and apprehended—as the darkness of the tomb.

POETS

OUR Poet's names are suns that shine and blaze
With dazzling splendour in the arc of Time ;
Restricted to no single age nor clime :—
Homer is ours, and Dante, all our days,
And Shakespeare with his noble wealth of plays.
A hundred others scale the skies sublime,—
Unsullied by the curse of cringing rhyme,—
Are crowned with beauty and immortal praise.

Their living works and beaten thoughts are ours,—
A matchless legacy of untold wealth,—
Surpassing sordid gold, and regal powers
Of many empires. They live not by stealth,
But by the confidence of fearless hours,—
Surviving failing spheres by deathless health.

POETS.

The lunatic, the lover, and the poet
Are of imagination all compact.—SHAKESPEARE.

Poets, though divine, are men.—BEN JOHNSON.

A Health to Poets ! all their days
May they have Bread, as well as Praise.—PARNELL.

POETS, according to the gospel of Shakespeare, are mad—mad as lunatics, mad as lovers. I have been informed by a competent medical authority, who has long been a prophet and an oracle in his profession, that lovers do actually wander in their minds during the 'silly' season. I was at first rude enough to imagine that *his* mind was wandering, but he appeared so earnest, and combated my arguments so strongly, so fairly, and with so much lucidity, that I was completely humbled, conquered in fact, and I gave him my hand and belief straightway.

But Shakespeare says lovers, lunatics, and poets are all alike. Alas ! that a poet should be a lunatic ! Alas ! that he should be mad ! Beware

then, ye sweet damosels of fair England, of accepting their poetical addresses; they are the effusions of a disordered mind, and may eventually lead to marriage. And oh, ye laughing tyrants of willing men, never marry a poet! For is he not mad?—mad as a March hare?—mad as a lunatic double-locked in a padded room? His imagination has run wild, and his heart is as diseased as his mind, since he is a lover and a poet at the same moment.

‘Sigh no more, ladies, sigh no more’

for a poet.

Mrs Carlyle advised a friend never to marry an author. I would also advise all the gentler readers of this book never to marry a poet. For he must, by his universally acknowledged temperament, be more irritable, unendurable, and far more painful to be borne with than a writer of prose, who has no necessity to agitate and excite himself into a fierce frenzy to make his words jingle. The prose writer only suffers from a disordered liver, or has his digestive apparatus out of repair; but the poet has a high-strung and tameless mind; it is a chaos of ideas, and a fiery fount of excitement; and when the metrical fever pays him a visitation he raves like a maniac. The medical man may relieve, and even cure, the first; but nothing but the breath of heaven, or maybe the smell of sulphur can

alleviate or restore the latter to a normal state of sanity or health. One, according to himself, is all spirit—ethereal ; the other all matter—common clay in fact. We may speedily expect the time when poets will refuse introductions to prose writers on the plea that they are too gross of constitution. A Tennyson, a Swinburne, or a William Morris refusing admittance to a Ruskin, a Froude, or a John Morley, would certainly be a novel scene, and would make a splendid farce for the inimitable Toole. But as it is an idle one, and not likely to occur, like John Bunyan I awake, and ‘behold it is a dream!’

I have scanned the countenances of many poets of renown, but have discovered no sign of insanity in the accepted term, except in very few instances. But I have seen great partiality for imbibing wine, gin, and even porter. At Munden’s farewell appearance the little lovable Charles Lamb was seen draining a ‘huge pot’ of the latter mixture, to his great content and Miss Kelly’s amusement. It was one of Munden’s four farewell ‘pots.’ He was thoughtful of Lamb, and doubtless did not forget he was a poet. Bravo, to the ghost of Munden ! Sensible, if comical, to the end. Poets appear to require stimulants, whether from partiality or necessity I cannot say. Perhaps both. Byron declared that gin and water was the source of his

inspiration. Indeed, he wrote the greater part of *Don Juan* under its influence, and it savours of it to this day. He urged Tom Medwin to drink, for, said he, 'If you were to drink as much as I do, you would write as good verses.' Alas! poor Byron, that he should be so great a fool. Still, he ought to know, for he drank a pint of Hollands 'almost every night.'

Poets are so very like ordinary mortals that they are mostly undistinguishable. Even the shade of Lavater would undergo many wriggings, and his ghostly features suffer severe contortions if compelled to select the poets, taking the indication of madness as his surest guide. The Paradise of Poets would be provided with extraordinary merri-ment for many a long day over his crude ideas and lamentable mistakes. Byron would write another *Vision of Judgment* and condemn the celebrated physiognomist for his pains.

At one time the poets were easily to be identified in the street by the important air, the rolling eye, the open neck, the long hair, the large cloak, and the Spanish hat. But this fashionable stupidity died out with the waning fame of Byron; and now our over-crowded streets have nothing to relieve their clothes-monotony in the shape of a distinct poetical garb. The husk of the poet is gone; but is the poet remaining? It is a trying question,

but happily it can be answered in the affirmative. We still have one poet of the old school, who yet affects the long hair, the big cloak, and wide-brimmed hat of past periods. We still have our Tennyson, who does his country honour, who has added many jewels to her great wealth of literature, and who has built for himself a splendid monument of just, honourable, and immortal fame. Tennyson is with us. But who else? Swinburne? Yes, we have Swinburne. He is a true poet, possessing real genius, but he appears to have given to the world his best work. We have William Morris also. But even he is a poet about whose work there are divers opinions. Still his place as a poet cannot be contested. There are many other men who publish verse, and who on that account are pushed forward as poets; but I, with many more, am too ignorant, or too blind, to recognise their claim to so great and unique a distinction. There are few poets, but many pretenders or versifiers. Still, because versifiers, they are not to be despised. They hold an honourable place in literature. Much of their verse is admirable, and sometimes rises to the genuine altitude of poetry; but take their work, as a whole, or in a technical and absolute sense it is not poetry but merely verse. It is neither a folly or a fault in a writer that his verse is not poetry, it is want of genius, or lack of natural

inspiration. There are passages in the works of many versifiers which are really magnificent. But passages are not a uniform work. They are unequal, never sustained, and do not entitle their author to take rank as a poet. Johnson contended that Congreve had *one* passage finer than anything he recollected in Shakespeare. But who would dream of comparing the dramatist of William with the dramatist of Elizabeth? Johnson did not, for he only fought for *one* passage. If Dryden thought Congreve equal to Shakespeare, his affection, or weakness of age, must have led his judgment astray; but his poetical epistle will warp none now. Both are almost neglected, and undoubtedly more than they deserve.

The extensive sale of a poetical book does not constitute its author a poet, or many poetasters of our time would be entitled to take rank with the Immortals. Many editions of a book prove nothing as to sense, power, merit, capacity, or worth. Rather more than sixty years since 'Satan' Montgomery was the idol of the book-buying public, while, at that time, Wordsworth, Shelley, and Keats were nothing more than so many sacrifices. But who reads Montgomery now? And who does not study and hold in highest admiration Wordsworth, Shelley, and Keats? The judgment of posterity is just, and is

it not the same in any age? I might instance Browning and his contemporaries, for most of Browning's best work was published when he was but little read, and at a time when Tupper was the darling of the multitude; or I might leap back to the glorious Shakespeare and the mighty Milton to instance further neglect of genius, to the advantage of very watery talent. But comparisons never tend to conciliation or improvement of bad tempers, and never cure that pleasant but terrible disease of self-blindness. No just or disinterested man cares one iota who is called poet, so long as *The Poet* has his reward.

There have been poetical ages ever since poetry came into fashion. If we suffer from a dearth of true poets we have a multitude of versifiers and poetasters. These do not place our metrical literature at a disadvantage when compared proportionally with the metrical literature of any other period. There are never more than a few *poets* existing at the same period. When Pope published there were a thousand petty scribblers in and out of Grub Street who are now mostly forgotten, or, if their names have escaped oblivion they owe that doubtful honour to the Dunciad. If their works are known at all, they must thank the penny box. I do not asseverate that there were no

other poets to keep Pope merry company, or to urge him to his best. That would be an injustice to Gay with his *Fables*, and to Addison with his *Cato*. Still no poet of that age was equal to the little satirical bard of Twickenham.

It was the same in the age of Goldsmith and Gray, and also that of Cowper. If Pope had Cibber for his laureate; Goldsmith and Gray had William Whitehead; and Cowper, Henry James Pye. Who knows which was worst? I always maintain that Pye fills that position in the pillory of mediocrity and poetic fame. Certainly not Cibber, for he has largely redeemed himself, and ensured our support, by writing a very interesting *Apology* which will always hold a high place in our dramatic literature. In another way Cibber has thrown a halo of glory round his name—if of the conceited kind, it is better than none; while Pye has nothing of any merit; his verses are dull, heavy, and wretched—none covet them—and few but the curious have read three lines; and even Whitehead is scarcely more remembered.

If we are flooded with poetical effusions we do not degenerate. This age, if not superior to the last, is at least equal. The age of Shelley, Wordsworth, and Keats is the most brilliant age of the century; but the present can meet

it with honour. There will always be writers of verse, however poor, notwithstanding Carlyle's repeated advice to all poets and versifiers to write in prose. But we cannot be astonished that his advice is continually disregarded, when many pronounce him to be mad—aye, madder than any poet in, or out of Christendom. Still, mad prophets have a message to deliver sometimes, and a message worth the hearing. But I cannot think *In Memoriam* would be better in prose, even though the shade of the Sage of Chelsea protested I was in error, and called me a fool for my obstinance. *His* faculty was to write in prose; but it was of the Homeric kind, full of wild and rugged melody, of which, perhaps, he was unconscious. He sang in his books, as he sang in his lectures, despite his own judgment and advice; and none wish him otherwise. He is our nineteenth century Homer, with the divine gift of singing in him—a gift which he can neither eradicate nor destroy. It is as certain and enduring as his ever-increasing and peerless fame.

Poetry has been condemned on the plea that it is puerile, sentimental, and foolish. But these 'nice' people who say 'nice' things are quite a distinct section in humanity. They carry their *níceness* in their countenances, and strive for

angelhood. Who does not know them when he sees them in the street or in a train, without one word being uttered? But I, with many others, detest these 'nice' people. Their angelhood is nothing more than a very thin kind of devilhood, with the proper liveliness belonging to that order ground out.

These people who dislike and shamelessly condemn poetry as 'stuff,' have generally had their tempers soured by an unlovely and undesired destiny, and so have become dead to all sentiment. Cross-grained old bachelors—living in chambers, or in clubs, and who drink hot-whisky-and-water over their papers, at the same time censuring statesmen, philanthropists, and landlords for disdaining their advice, so generously and charitably given in a letter to the editor of the *Times*, concerning the amelioration of the poverty, famine, and suffering caused by the failure of the potato crop—these are the men who call poetry 'stuff,' and speedily by a harsher name if their opinion is combated. But cross-grained old bachelors should not condemn the poet or versifier for his over-strong sentimentality, for he holds a licence to be a fool, if it should be to his taste; and furthermore, the ladies 'dote' upon it. But consider, my poor unlucky mortals—and this will increase your selfishness, of which

you have already overmuch—consider their sentiment may be of service to you should you fall in love at the very respectable age of seventy-five. You may be incapable of writing an ardent lover's letter, much more of inditing a love-sonnet. Abuse not the sentimental poet, for his sentiment will be yours, ready-made, for the small cost of three-and-sixpence, or even for fourpence, should you dip into the outside box in Booksellers' Row. He will not be acquainted with your pardonable hypocrisy should you pass off his sentiment for your own, neither will your fond mistress. She will naturally take it as yours, and thus two of God's creatures will be made happy; but at the expense of a poor poet's sentiment.

The sentimental poet is always warmly welcomed and very prettily caressed in the drawing-rooms of the fashionable—it is his high prerogative and undoubted privilege. Burns, the Ayrshire plough-boy, with his amorous love-songs, if somewhat coarse, hands jewelled duchesses down to dinner; Moore, with the questionable poems by the late Thomas Little, Esq., sings his own melodies in fashionable saloons, and has a Lord John Russell for his biographer; and Byron, the profligate poet, with a 'very questionable *Don Juan* up his sleeve, has ladies ready to cling round his neck

like leeches, and has a Lady Caroline Lamb to deliver her own *billet-doux* by her own hand, in the dress of a page. These are the customs and manners of the sentimental poets. And if any poet was the poet of sentiment, the poet of the women, it was Byron. He was the idol of countless drawing-rooms, and the fair sex lavished on him every species of feminine folly; we therefore cannot wonder that he was lost in a whirlpool of sentiment, and the hero of his own poems.

Poetry must have some degree of sentiment. It would be worthless without its combination. To abolish sentiment in poetry would be taking away much of its melody, beauty, and taste. It would render it harsh, dry, and vigorously tough, and the drum of the poetical ear would be pitifully shattered. It would remain poetry no longer, but would become a wretched mistake. Shakespeare without his sentiment would be reduced to a bone-shaking skeleton; Chaucer would collapse, and Spenser utterly dissolve; Homer would be as dead as his own gods, and Dante engulfed in the abyss of his own hell; Milton would fade disastrously, and Goethe would have no margin to save either himself or his *Faust*. As to the minor poets, whose very existence depends entirely upon their sentiment, they would be entirely crushed. He who censures

the sentimentality of the poet, opens himself to Johnson's silencing reproof, 'Enough, sir ; you do not appear to understand the question.' Sentiment is the life of the poet, and often the cardinal beauty of his verse. When it ceases to be employed, poetry will have passed through the cremationary state, and exist in ashes alone.

I have warned my fair readers not to ally themselves to a poet in the iron bands of matrimony, on account of his proverbial madness. If they have no objection to that disorder, but are pleased to think it a sign of genius, I would whisper one other failing—which perhaps they may also fancy a lovely characteristic of genius—which is an infirmity of temper. This, for the benefit of all interested, particularly displays itself in an impatience of interruption. When the inspired poet is seated on Mount Parnassus, at the feet of the Muses, he has shaken off the trammels of earth, has thrown aside his material being, and is all spirit ; his mortality is forgotten, and he abides in some Elysium coarser mortals see not, nor feel. To interrupt him then is to break his connection with the beautiful, the intellectual, and the unseen ; it is to cause him to remember that he is still a man, and a very impatient one. At such a moment, beware of his rage ; it will be past control, and entirely unmanageable. It was

on a similar occasion that Lady Byron intruded upon the privacy of her husband. She asked him, in a silken manner, 'Am I in the way, Byron?' but she instantly repented her rash question, for he answered in a frenzy of genuine Byronic passion, 'Damnably so!' But to you, fond maidens, who love to listen to the soft addresses and sweet melody of a poet—to you whose hearts are bent upon union—I say, for your comfort and encouragement, if indeed the latter is ever required, that all poets are not Byrons, either in genius or passion. Wordsworth lived happily with his wife, as did Southey; and if Shelley was not fully satisfied with his first, he was more than delighted with his second. Still all jealousy must be subdued or laid aside, since it is the poet's profession to court the lovely Nine, who are famed both for divine beauty and divine passions. Be considerate and fear not, for they only exist in the poet's mind. It is only a high-wrought imagination and a keen sensibility that can make them real. Break not his visions, disturb not his dreams, and all will be well; for, according to common report, the poet is understood to be a delightful being, even if he is somewhat conceited, and a trifle in love with an effective dress. Browning had a shade of the dandy about him in his youth, but his

domestic relations were of the happiest, and his welcome always hearty to friends.

On the whole, when the poet has laid aside his dreamy madness and his subtle inspiration, he is to the gentler sex a lovable being, and to the sterner a sociable one. If he is treated with asperity, contempt, or abuse he is apt to retaliate smartly and keenly, for he, of all men, is the most sensible to insult or injury, and will repay with interest. His weapon is satire. A few sharp, cutting, scathing lines eat into the flesh and soul of the accused like red-hot steel. Provoke not a poet if you cannot endure his satirical mood with a firm countenance and a steady heart. Tonson felt the terrible sting of satire when Dryden wrote describing him :—

‘ With leering looks, bull-faced, and freckled fair,
With two left legs, and Judas-coloured hair,
And frowsy pores that taint the ambient air.’

This biting triplet, strengthened by the message sent with it—‘Tell the dog that he who wrote these can write more’—was amply sufficient to cure Jacob of his injustice and animosity.

The poet is not satirical because he loves satire. It is part of his vocation to lash the vices and follies of the age. If a modern poet wields the pen of a Catullus to satirise a Cæsar, or many

Cæsars, it is because so many Cæsars exist who make the probe or the lash necessary. If parliament, society, and general life were more pure, there would be less necessity for the metrical animadversions and satirical verses of the poet. He, too, is not immaculate any more than the universal man he so deliberately satirises. The amendment of one would prove the aggrandisement of both.

I have done. Of all poets and poetasters I take an affectionate farewell, wishing laurels to entwine the brows of the former, and better verse to evolve from the brains of the latter.

AUTHORS

GREAT spirits hail ! I worship at your shrine,
And drop this halting sonnet at your feet ;
There I have drunk immortal words and sweet,
Which thrilled my being like rich luscious wine,
And seized my soul with strength almost divine.
Supreme ye sit in each exalted seat,
With more than majesty of kings, and greet
The world, as lovers' arms their loves entwine.

Like others, you have gone into that land,—
Where envy, weakness, folly, suffer death.
Your works live on, supported by the hand
Of deathless worth ; and your fame entereth
The centuries as they roll. The living stand
Successors to your realm of vigorous breath.

AUTHORS.

Few, indeed, are endowed with that strength of construction that should enable them to ride triumphant on the tide of ages.

GODWIN.

Awake ! arise ! Speak forth what is in thee ; what God has given thee ; what the Devil shall not take away.—CARLYLE.

A great author . . . is one who has something to say and knows how to say it.—NEWMAN.

WE have too many books. A sad cry for one who adds another to the pile, but sadly true. Year by year the steam presses belch forth their thousands ; and year by year these thousands are increased. We are in danger of being either suffocated or surfeited, perhaps both. There are too many books to purchase ; even if classified, too many to read ; and, what is of more importance for the state of modern literature, too many not worth reading. The myriad myriads which the fathers of Pater-noster Row, and their growing sons of the West, rain upon us represent but a poor type of English brains and English authorship. Censure and pity is required from the critic ; perseverance and appli-

cation from the author. The reader would not then so often lay down his newly-purchased book with a growl or a sigh.

There is not only a just ground of complaint to be made against our minor authors, but also a juster one against our greater or great authors. Some of them do not rise, or even attempt to rise, to their full strength, do not sufficiently tax their splendid minds, do not shake their deep souls with the earnestness of their predecessors, and certainly do not satisfy our conceptions of their unmistakable powers. They do this to the injury of their fame, and at an immense loss to the public. We rarely ever read a modern great book. There are many which are eminently readable, but very few which can lay claim to the term—great. No book of this metal was published last year, nor the year previous.

This decay of the genuine book is a literary question. It is also much more—it is national. Our literature must either reflect credit or discredit on England, or both have changed for the worse. It is by our books, and particularly those of the famous class, which have rapid and enormous sales and create a sensation for a time, that many foreigners gauge the strength and qualities of the typical English mind. Still, there are many foreign readers who are not to be deceived by shams and

sensations, and who know our great books better than we know them ourselves.

In most modern books there is a general want of honesty, earnestness, purpose, intense study, and moral courage. There is infinite milk-and-water, but no fiery spirit of vitality. Deathly refinement, artificial smoothness, and horrible dread, sit in the author's study. Every time he pens a brave passage of outspoken truth he trembles for a thousand fancied consequences, which consequences are nothing more dangerous or disastrous than flesh and blood critics. The bold sentence is struck out, and he quietly proceeds to write hypocritically or weakly.

I have a persuasive fancy that the decline of authorship as a profession is the cause of so many wretched and worthless books. The poor, old, grey-headed fellow has caught a chill at last, and is gradually sinking into the inane. There have been many just and strong arguments against authorship by profession, but none against the professional author of any repute, who can exchange words for gold on any blustering morning. He who ploughs the human mind forgets the bad weather, and turns over the rich or indifferent soil as coolly as ever. Rain, hail, or snow do not stay his hand. And there is nothing to be said against his continuing his profession on the same old lines.

Authorship as a profession can only be begun and maintained in two ways. The would-be author must either possess some independent means for support till success comes—if it ever does come ; or, failing that, he must be contented to live in a cellar as Goldsmith did before him ; or strive to sustain the physical system on sixpence a day—if the sixpence is forthcoming—as did brave old Samuel Johnson when he first came to London. If any visits are to be paid they must be managed on ‘clean shirt day.’ If poverty, adversity, and neglect cannot be endured for a season, better turn to some honest profession than put a period to existence after the manner of poor Chatterton ; for it is a coward’s trick, even when circumstances are at the worst. If independent means stand sure, like the pillars of Hercules, he who is seeking success and fame by literary work may safely take his ease in his own study, and wait patiently. He may even venture to snap his fingers at misfortune and neglect, and whistle, ‘The Cure for all Care.’

The author by profession has this tremendous advantage over the semi-writer ; all his time, energy, and talents, can be devoted to the cultivation of his mind, in building up knowledge for future use. He becomes saturated with history and literature in all forms ; and if fortunate with

a shrewd observation, and has amassed knowledge of men and things, he is qualified more than any man—excluding the man of genius—to produce a useful, if not a great book. But suppose he has genius together with universal knowledge, who is then to stand against him? The Fates could not bar his progress, hinder his success, or cloud his fame. On the other hand no semi-writer can produce a respectable book, unless he has a brilliant intellect, since he has neither time nor opportunity to read books or to gather knowledge. I do not say there are not exceptions, but they are rare. In most cases the professions themselves are literary, or closely allied to literature, as, for instance, Law and Parliament. Neither are incompatible with a literary life. For some professors in the Legal Courts, and some members of Parliament, often read more literature than law reports or blue books, and associate with literary men more than with those of their public calling. Sir Thomas More and Lord Bacon each wrote a great book. And to leap over the intervening centuries to our own, we have Macaulay, who produced one of the greatest works of this century. But, as a Member of Parliament, he could find ample time, when out of office and in—if we dare take Mr Gladstone as an example—for study and writing, except when dining out. Parliament was

subservient to literature; not that he shirked his duties, for he amalgamated both, and certainly not to the injury of the former. Many of his speeches were literary, and his history is enriched with parliamentary knowledge. Still further, the greater portion of that magnificent work was written when not a Member of Parliament, and much when in opposition. During the entire period of his literary career he had been collecting and digesting materials for the great effort of his life. He wrote much, certainly, when in Parliament; but what Macaulay could produce with comparative ease would have caused the death of another. For was not Macaulay more than an ordinary man? Was he not more than a common writer? His knowledge was universal, his memory astounding, his diligence indefatigable, his intellect stupendous, his genius transcendental.

The professional author with genius is the one man to produce a work which will have higher and more lasting qualities than a mere readable book. But even he must first shake off his indolence, gather his forces, and concentrate his energies. He must labour and be patient. Southey wrote many good works—his prose in excellent style—but perhaps no eminently great one. Still, his circumstances ought, at all times, in justice to his

brave perseverance, to share in the ample censure which cursed him through life, and after. With him time was really money, and no sentiment. If no article was written at the proper period for the *Quarterly*, and no book ready occasionally for the press, he, together with 'bairns and wife,' would have suffered from the bitterness of poverty. Had he not worked so manfully his home would not have been so happy—I use the word *happy* in the largest sense—and his beloved library books would not have been so handsome and numerous, and his 'Cottonian Library' would have been fuller. If any author deserved success it was Southey, for he earned it. He was always a man of method. He worked methodically, and took his pleasure and recreation on the same principle. His books were arranged with the careful taste of a correct man, and in his library not a thing was out of place. He had a 'Cottonian Library' to hide the battered calf and ragged cloth of the poorer volumes. Truly Southey differs much from other authors, for none are very orderly in their libraries. That place is their paradise as well as workshop; but it is nothing if not chaotic. De Quincey was a model author for literary untidiness, for he was always 'snowed up' with books and papers in one room, and sometimes in three, and in three different houses. Still the Opium-Eater's extravagant arrangement

cannot be recommended for adoption, and especially to a poor author in London, for he would always be in arrears with his rents, and find no peace from the harassing pertinacity of continual dunning.

Carlyle as a professional author cannot be praised too warmly or too well. His perseverance was remarkable, his patience inexhaustible, his courage firm. Success was long in coming, but he never lost faith or confidence in his own powers. He had a message to deliver, which at last 'got itself delivered' in spite of publishers, critics, a bad liver, biliousness, crowing cocks, cackling hens, sleepless nights, braying bands, noisy boys, street cries, indigestion, and the devil. Carlyle surmounted all his troubles. If he railed somewhat in doing so we forgive him for his own sake. His genius was rewarded; not amply, that could scarcely be affected in his own time, for his genius is of the eternal kind, but it was rewarded very significantly to himself in many ways.

Whatever may be in evidence for or against authorship as a profession, I cannot help lamenting its deterioration. When in full vigour, as in the three several times of Dryden, Pope, and Johnson, letters held a much more distinct place than now. Authors were not more respected. That could not be. No class of men are regarded with more

affection and esteem, or sought after more in our day, than authors of repute. But as a class, or a body, they are not so exclusive as in the times I have adverted to. The fine old literary circles, which were true to their foundation and nature, have departed, perhaps wisely, for certainly there is less wine drank. We have our literary clubs on gigantic proportions; but can they match THE LITERARY CLUB solely restricted and limited to a few choice wits and men of letters?—scarcely. A dinner or supper at the Mitre, with Johnson, Goldsmith, Burke, Reynolds, Boswell and Garrick for company, would be worth a hundred at the Athenæum. The talk—ah, where is there talk to be compared with it? Burke would open—ring the bell, as he called it; Reynolds, with his ear-trumpet, would be all attention; then the great Johnson would begin to make ‘little fishes talk like whales’; Goldsmith would venture to slip in a remark, a pregnant or a wise one; Boswell would occasionally question his idol, and drink port, between times, with much relish; and Garrick’s fine eyes would sparkle as he whipped out a joke, or imitated his old master’s manner of speech—‘Who’s for *poonsh*?’

To have exchanged a nod or a word with Dryden as he sat in his chair at Will’s; or to have secured a grunt or a rebuff from Johnson as he sat

surrounded by his friends at the club, were proud moments for the recipients; and to be permitted to listen to their conversation was an honour to be coveted with eagerness. These men ennobled literature. They were respected, revered, loved; and their canons of taste became law. What Dryden said at Will's of the last new poem was repeated the following morning in every coffee-house from St Giles's to St James's; and what Johnson said at the club was jotted down afterwards by the indefatigable Boswell, and in a few years became the property of millions.

But what I mostly deplore in modern authorship is that our best writers seldom produce great works. I am not so dull, absurd, or unreasonable in the understanding as to expect any single writer of merit to publish great works repeatedly. No author can repeatedly publish great works unless he is a prodigal of genius; and no author can fully rise to the dignity of his former excellence if he publishes hurriedly or frequently. He must be patient at his labour, and think little or nothing of time. Tennyson produced his best work early. He has nothing so masterly and magnificent, in entirety, as *In Memoriam*, or *Maud*. A poet or an author would excel Shakespeare in uniformity, and surpass him in sustained greatness, did he produce numerous great works

with equal splendour, and with the same degree of merit. Even he did not write all *Othellos* and *Hamlets*; and we cannot expect any modern author to perform feats which were impossible to our great national poet. Milton, also, was not equal; neither was Chaucer, nor Dante, nor Goethe, nor Walter Scott, nor Thomas Carlyle. It is not wise to demand too much. Indeed, it is exceedingly foolish in the difficult art of producing meritorious literature.

Still many modern writers, and especially poets, are taxed with a decay of vigour and a loss of genius. The assertions of the critic are honest, consistent, faithful, but not always true. A great poet cannot produce poems of equal force, majesty, beauty, splendour, depth, insight, fascination, power. There must be the wearying labour of many years devoted to each separate creation of his fancy; there must be hacking and hewing, digging and ploughing, cutting and pruning, polishing and refining, before the later work will begin to equal the splendid production of earlier years, and, in most cases, not even then. There will be something lacking. The labour effected to eclipse former magnificence will be fruitless. The brain will not always perform the functions of a prior period; not because there is any clouding of the imagination, that the conception has narrowed,

that there is any intellectual weakness or decay of vigour, but because the great poem was the unfolding of a mighty soul bursting with new fire. It was the creation of a kosmos from a chaos; the intense thought of a mind inspired direct from the fount of Nature; the wild pulsations of a poet's heart, never before properly relieved of its burning fever, fiery earnestness, magic beauty, sweet loveliness, and almost divine melody. The great poem is the life of a stupendous soul. It would be folly to expect two such books of most poets independent of another soul. Of course it is possible for an original mind, or a man of genius, to produce two or a dozen great books, prose or poetry, when the entire soul was not centred and absorbed in the first, or when the circumstances and environment of life are totally different or changed, which create a new life. Continuous great books can also be written when much outside matter is brought to bear upon a subject, and made subservient to it. The plays of Shakespeare illustrate this.

No author leaps fully equipped with wisdom and knowledge into the arms of literature. He must struggle with manifold labour to secure a respectable place in the niche of fame. When he indites works strictly technical in knowledge, or dependent upon his maturer wisdom, it may

be possible to multiply even very excellent works. This applies generally to historians and biographers. Their material is always ready-made. But the genuine poet of Nature almost entirely depends upon his own imaginative mind. Most multiplied works, though excellent in their own department, are not actually great in literature. A man of genius cannot give more than his life ; neither can a poet's soul yield more than it contains.

We have many respectable authors, but very few great ones. Mr Rider Haggard is not a great author, but he is a very interesting and readable one, although he is not always at his best. For absorbing fascination and startling revelation he has never equalled *She*, perhaps never will. We had been with *Jess*, but *She* eclipsed her. It was written in a 'happy vein,' and with the inspiration of a poet's heart, although frequently charmed with the barbarity of 'hot-potting' and 'blasting.' It has been condemned for being wildly unnatural and improbable ; but fiction is usually unnatural and improbable. If full of interest, who wishes it otherwise ? Improbability is the novelist's cardinal virtue—certainly it is Mr Rider Haggard's. Like the poet, he is allowed a wide margin for sentiment. There has been no such intensely interesting novel published these

five years. Thousands in reading its fascinating pages forgot there was any such place as England, that they had any sorrows, or any other books on the library shelves; they only dwelt in the dominion of Kòr, and remembered no other woman but the beautiful *Ayesha*. Her beauty bewitched everyone. Many tumbled over head and ears in love with her. They did not even stay to reflect on her peculiar power of blasting—they loved, and could not cure the affection under a month's battling with the outside world. It was almost a miraculous conception. If Mr Rider Haggard never produces another novel of equal enchantment and merit the public cannot take offence, neither can the author. Both should have an inward sense of satisfaction and pleasure of having read and written a novel which for thrilling interest and intense feeling, without corruption and degradation, is almost unique. As a novel in its own department of fiction it is so admirable that I can only desire that the author would devise some means of genius or witchcraft to revive his beautiful and enchanting *She*.

Many modern authors of known repute are charged with degeneration and decay, in both matter and style of writing, and they are so charged by the public press which has hugged them so fondly, complimented them so gener-

ously, and lauded them so highly. Maybe many deserve this inconstancy and censure, but there are those who have merited neither. The prime cause of degeneration in an ordinary writer is the warm adulation and excessive praise of a dangerous temporary fame, which occasionally pushes a man to a sublime altitude where, if not one of Nature's sons, he speedily becomes intoxicated with his own importance, falls giddy, and suffers freely from a very peculiar type of insanity. He becomes lost to all sense but that of infant greatness. He honestly believes the world sincere—that his fame will last, and his name never perish—that the public is hourly waiting, with intense eagerness, for another work from his pen—that it cannot live without him; and in the madness of his high fever and seeming immense popularity, hastily produces volume after volume, until the public and the press either neglect his works or damn them, or both, according to fancy or common sense. Many popular authors absurdly but assuredly seal their own death-warrant by over-production, and then rail at critics for blasting notices, and grumble at the public for not purchasing their watery, inefficient, and immature works.

A transitory laudation is generally lavished on an author who is in no sense worthy of dis-

tinguished or popular praise. When his works come to be examined by the disinterested—by those who are not in the slightest degree swayed by public opinion—they are usually found to be on a dead level with most books of the same order, and very widely removed from the elevation, vigour, tone, eloquence, and worth, of many which are persistently underrated. To be shot up like a rocket is often to come down like the stick. Recent and other instances will occur to anyone acquainted with the history of ancient and modern authorship. Anyone interested in the literature of the past few years will call to mind many authors who are occupying false positions. They enjoy success, prosperity, popularity, fame, and yet have neither wit nor genius to qualify the sale of their works, or the huzzas of the multitude.

This state is not novel. Often has the drivelling author been lauded at the expense of a great one. Genius has suffered neglect and poverty on innumerable occasions, while the insignificant writer with the happy knack of turning polished phrases, and who has not thought cringing an indignity to his manhood, has been petted in the lap of luxury, and enjoyed the friendship and the smiles of the great. The names of many neglected and starving men of genius are now

immortal, and ring in the ears of the literary Englishman, sweeter in melody than the music of the poet's lyre. Their brilliant or stupendous intellects live in their works, and find a permanent place in the magnificent literature of England ; while the works of the little men, pampered and caressed for a day, are now covered with oblivious dust, never to be swept away except by the curious who, when their curiosity is satisfied, suffer from a failing of adding contempt to neglect.

There is one popular modern author—Mr Andrew Lang—who, because enjoying popularity, must not necessarily be included in the above censure. His fame is honest and deserving, if his fame can be measured by the sale of his works and the increasing high price of his first editions. He writes in a delightful and entertaining style, and has written many books, mostly stamped with his light, literary taste, which recommends them so pleasantly for arm-chair and after-dinner reading. Still his readers do not care to be constantly reminded that he has translated part of Homer, by his occasional toying with Greek ; neither are they particularly fond of his ample quotations from the Latin poets. At this end of the nineteenth century both can be dispensed with without a single sigh. We have more than

sufficient Latin quotations in our seventeenth and eighteenth century books, and there is no necessity for any modern author to revive a discarded style which is neither loved nor craved. Mr Andrew Lang is not a great author ; but he could be great by an effort, for both by genius and learning he is eminently qualified to produce a really great work. I never read his tasteful books without wishing that he would do less editing and trifling with literature, and concentrate his mind, energies, and knowledge on some substantial piece of workmanship.

If we have many minor and readable authors we have some great ones still remaining with us. We have Ruskin ; and who does not reverence Ruskin as an author of sublime genius ? But by the course of Nature we can scarcely expect more from his rosy pen. We have Mr Froude, whose recent *Life of Beaconsfield* has shown that he is still great. Also we have Mr John Morley. Of all modern authors, great or little, he, to my mind, is the most competent to produce the greatest work of the time. We have no writer whose English is so generous, vigorous, nervous, abundant, or so finely selected. His style is splendid—almost perfect ; his knowledge vast and far-reaching ; and his judgment critical and nicely balanced. The literature of England cannot but suffer from his

adherence to politics. Still, however high he may mount as a politician, he can, and perhaps will, produce a work which will create an epoch in literary history. Macaulay accomplished the transcendent feat; why not Mr John Morley?

I always lament to see a great, lofty, and original man of genius turn aside to write trivial articles, excellent in their way but not of permanent value, unless the circumstances justify the turning aside. If Macaulay had not paused in his *History* to write the five lives in the *Encyclopædia Britannica*, which are indeed models of their kind, we might have been in the possession of the *History of the Reign of Queen Anne* from the same pen, as only that pen could have written it. I have ever deplored that Macaulay was rocked in the cradle of death, and went down into the grave with the political, literary, and social history of that Augustan age unwritten. No man had more knowledge of that period, or was acquainted with the characters so fully, individually, and well; and no man knew better how to adapt and arrange his historical and minute material so appily, consecutively, and vividly. But mighty events, finished or unfinished, turn on small hinges. If a committee of booksellers had not waited on indolent Samuel Johnson in Bolt Court, our literature would never have been enriched by his

Lives of the Poets; and, on the other hand, Macaulay's five lives probably robbed us of a reign.

In these days of universal knowledge and learning it is more urgent and essential than at any time for great minds to shun small books and not lend their names to them. The people are thirsting for wisdom, new knowledge, and fresh writings of an original and generous cast; and who can supply them but the men who reside in the temple of genius, learning, and labour? Authorship is an honourable profession, but it would be nobler did great authors make use of their high prerogatives, stand by their charter of liberties given by Nature, exert their minds, rise upon their dignity of intellect and sublimity of genius, and indite worthy books. Competition is keen, but it has little to do with natural genius. Wedded to manful labour it can stand upon its own merits.

If English literature is to grow, to retain its original lustre, to add to its immortal wealth, to grasp hands with Chaucer, Spenser, Shakespeare, Milton, Pope, Wordsworth, Shelley, Carlyle, the great modern authors, known or unknown, must write the weak, the trivial, the unworthy and the insignificant out of the field, and stand like heroes upon their own god-like strength, with the sunlight, not only of Nature, but of Art upon their

brows. Each great author has an immense responsibility devolving upon him. He must sustain the credit and honour of his profession ; he must do his duty as a great author ; he must write manfully, nobly, conscientiously, fearlessly, generously, greatly. If they win laurels, or win nothing, no circumstance shouldr ender them either petulant or proud. Duty will always out-balance any petty distinction the world can bestow.

Our national literature is vast, is great, is sublime, is immortal. That it will become sullied or degenerate I have no fear ; that it will maintain its original excellence I have the warmest hopes and the highest trust. Genius has rendered it illustrious, and she will never forsake her own, but sustain her greatness for all time.

BOOKS

E

MY treasured books, arrayed in every dress,—
From 'full morocco extra' to 'old calf,'
I love them with a mightier strength by half
Than any miser his red gold, and bless
Their many-coloured backs with soft caress,
Not with the hand, but eye, which oft doth laugh
At their full rows in tenderness, and quaff
Sublime delight, and never wish them less.

It may be weakness to affect them so,
But there is pardon for a virtuous craze :
If I extract their wisdom as I go,
Or folly, or conceit, and shun the maze
Of brainless madness which 'collectors' show,
I hold my rapture is deserving praise.

BOOKS.

A good book is the precious life-blood of a master spirit.—MILTON.

My days among the Dead are past ;
Around me I behold,
Where'er these casual eyes are cast,
The mighty minds of old ;
My never-failing friends are they,
With whom I converse day by day.—SOUTHEY.

I will bury myself in my books, and the Devil may pipe to his own.—TENNYSON.

OUR books are among our most pleasant and coveted possessions. Next to friends they are our choicest companions. They are ever welcome ; and if, at times, they prove wearisome, they have this redeeming virtue—they can be readily closed or laid aside. In this instance—and indeed in many others—they are better than talkative friends. We cannot stay *their* tide of eloquence—generally of the watery kind—or show them the door. Either mode of procedure would show lack of good breeding. But books—delightful books—they know not manners, and are insensible to insult.

We can treat them according to our disposition, nature, or will, and meet with no opposition, railing, or complaint. Not even the semblance of a cry was heard when Wordsworth flung Carlyle's translation of *Wilhelm Meister* across the room in disgust. Two great natures communing with the Universal All, yet communing differently, and, in consequence, an imperfect adjustment of sympathy one with the other. Excellent books! patient friends!

In our books we have the best mental wealth of all ages stored up for all time. We can test and can revel in the mind of Homer, Æschylus, Sophocles, and Plato; Virgil and Dante; Molière and Voltaire; Goethe and Schiller; and to come to our grand old English masters: Chaucer, Spenser, Shakespeare, and Milton; Bacon, Locke, and Newton. This is a superb muster roll, even without the grandeur and the beauty of some of our latter-day writers, such as Pope, Addison, Goldsmith, Keats, Shelley, and Wordsworth; to come a step nearer, Macaulay and Carlyle, who alone are able to save a nation from literary contempt. These names have the genuine mellow ring about them, and, when repeated, raise the spirits of any bookish man. Who can grumble or insinuate that he is dull with all this marvellous array—not of talent but of high-born genius—

within easy reach of purse, hand, and mind? Does an ungrateful oddity of this stamp exist, his mental faculties deserve to perish, after the manner of Rider Haggard's *She*, in the dissolving fire that gave immortality.

Whose mind could starve even if restricted to that magnificent modern trio—De Quincey, Macaulay, and Carlyle? Their works are noble, generous, honest, teeming with critical instruction and reliable information. They were the master spirits in the prose department of literature during their own age, and will retain their position above many ages. Widely dissimilar in matter, method, and style—as indeed was unavoidable, since one of the chief characteristics of genius is its originality—any estimate I might form of them singly, one against the other, would be frivolous, useless, and perhaps unjust. They each hold a distinct position in the reader's mind, and each position is lofty and nicely balanced. One is admirable for one quality, the others for qualities exactly opposite. We cannot wish any of the trio different, or more like any given one. We can no more dispense with the unfailing energy and splendid pomp of Macaulay; the rugged sincerity and rhapsodical style of Carlyle; the exactitude and sublime march of De Quincey, than we can

dispense with the universal majesty of Shakespeare. One is complete without the other, yet all are necessary to body forth the glorious intellectual force and brilliant genius which existed during the early and middle part of this century.

Their divers works stand on our library shelves in irregular order, like a militia regiment with the sizes 'well mixed.' First, single, and collected editions merge together in familiar ease, and their faded covers appear more beautiful to the book-lover's eye than the brightest rainbow tints. Those who have an admiration for De Quincey, and act upon it in collecting, have lately had his corner supplemented by fourteen handsome red-coated volumes, admirably edited by Professor Masson. This is the last collected edition, and the best. It supersedes all others ; and the most fastidious in text and notes could not desire a better. Macaulay and Carlyle are equally as well served, although not so frequently purchased in this wholesale fashion. Their works, being always obtainable in good, correct single editions, are generally bought piecemeal, and especially the *Sartor Resartus* of Carlyle, which gains in popularity by time, and is now honestly understood. I must not permit these three 'writers of books' to usurp the small space I had intended for books alone. But giants—literary or otherwise—must always be

seen. If they assert their pre-eminence my error is virtuous, and does not fear the blast of criticism.

Books are tremendously seductive. If we begin a conversation or an essay on that subject a seer alone is able to forecast the conclusion. We instantly start at a rapid pace for the uplands, when it is our intention to wander leisurely along the valleys and meander through the meadows. Our self-control is lost under the powerful influence of the flowers of literature. Ben Jonson is named, and the mighty Shakespeare immediately overshadows him with his finer intellect. Goldsmith quietly takes a seat, and before he can utter a word Johnson's loud voice demands universal attention. Coventry Patmore is mentioned, and in a moment Tennyson is the theme. The great names so engross our thoughts that there remains but small opportunity for the less-favoured minor ones to be justly noticed. The literary Titans are an over-towering race, but their mantles of genius cover a multitude of unconscious sins. Still let them onward, and receive the world's homage as their due. The Fates will forgive.

Great books are the intellectual fibre of a nation in a living and tangible form. Bloody battles are fought, are won, and henceforth are nothing nobler

than a terrible piece of vanity which has drained the blood of thousands. Brave deeds are achieved, and are applauded, yet they are forever accomplished and their purpose fulfilled. But great books, which are nothing less than great minds perpetuated, live, as the ages live, to lap eternity. Indeed, it is one of their prime prerogatives that they are restricted to no single limit of time; and, with the modern facility for acquiring languages, they are circumscribed to no people. Free education and free libraries will tend to preserve great books more than at any time during the past; but both will be the death of the crowd, and will put myriads out of date. Still a well-merited oblivion is to be preferred to an unmerited applause.

No force, however strong, can crush or annihilate a great book. When once published it is forever public property, and if it takes a firm grip of the people's mind suffocation is impossible. Fascination, utility, or merit, has rendered it immortal; and even the Furies have no rage to counteract its popularity. The Bible is a noble instance; and Shakespeare another, but in a less degree, and after a different manner. No influence, method, or power can exterminate him. He is the arch-angel of literature, whose trumpet-blast refuses to be hushed. He maintains so powerful a hold

upon his grateful and hero-worshipping countrymen, that they would lose many things, almost all things literary, but not their more than kingly Shakespeare, whose mental statue is of the gods. The critical English Opium-Eater thinks India would be the sacrifice were both thrown into the balance. I cannot assent to the largeness, perhaps the madness, of this opinion; but I entirely agree to its spirit. The question is not altogether idle, although it can never occur, as it indicates the temper and the lofty admiration not of one literary genius, but of many, and of many more who can lay no claim to that peculiar constitution of mind. For England's, perhaps, the world's, greatest poet is the master of all, and the tyrant of none. He holds his high place not only regally but gracefully, the latter being an altitude so many, who are otherwise noble and great, fully forget.

Shakespeare is generally ably represented in most libraries where there are only a few books. Enter into the study of the literary student or writer, and if the *First Folio* is not there, as indeed it could not well be, for the poverty of authors is proverbial, our poet will almost certainly be found in a good edition, ranging from one to a dozen octavo volumes. Open anywhere, and especially at *Hamlet*, *Lear*, or *Othello*, and instantly the

curious eye will detect that there is no stiffness at the back indicating idleness, which will give evidence that he is not for display but for earnest study. The young man with literary tastes, and only possessing twenty or thirty books beside those of his profession, usually has a Shakespeare among them, if only in one ragged volume, 'picked up' in Hollywell Street for fourpence. He is also frequently to be met with in small households and cottages. Even the country labourer can sometimes repeat his passage from Shakespeare with much apparent relish. And I have often heard him quoted when least expected. The child lisps at home what he has learnt at school, and the old man remembers it on the settle, and so isolated lines are familiar everywhere.

The glorious dramatist and poet is fettered by no limitation: his popularity is universal, his admirers are manifold. They are of no one class, but of all classes. His merit has no distinction but the purest and the highest; his fame is supreme and enduring; he is so altogether and unquestionably great that he can almost lay a just claim to infinity.

In most libraries, but not all, of any pretensions, we shall find a Spenser. He does not retain so strong a grasp as Chaucer, whose popularity in-

creases yearly. And the reason is obvious. Spenser delights us with fantasy, but Chaucer does more; he both teaches and delights with life. The obsolete words and antique spelling of Chaucer repel many from attempting his *Pilgrimage to Canterbury* 'with full devout corage;' but to as many, I believe, these easily-surmounted obstacles are a positive pleasure. Like most difficulties they are more imaginative than real. Chaucer will be read and studied in the future, more than at any time during the past. He gives us a faithful picture of fourteenth century life, and that should overcome much yawning.

Milton also has a prominent place on most library shelves. I like to see him in the small quarto—first edition—in ten books; but with a limited purse it is not always possible. In whatever edition he is purchased his thoughts of beaten gold are a rich and excellent exchange. He has been more 'dipped' than actually read; and even more talked about than 'dipped.' Indeed the weak babble about Milton and his Epic has been endless. From his time to ours it has been fashionable and critical to pronounce *Paradise Regained* inferior in structure, diction, and sublimity to *Paradise Lost*. Macaulay thinks it would have been well for Milton's fame if only the first three books of the latter had escaped

the grasp of time, and that the final seven had been irretrievably buried in oblivion. That is a matter of taste as much as a point of criticism. In an essay of this kind it would be improper to debate either way. However much we may critically peruse and critically judge the merit of *Paradise Lost*, the blind bard of the Commonwealth will always maintain his position as England's greatest poet, next to Shakespeare. His celebrated prayer, beginning, 'And chiefly Thou, O Spirit,' and his sonnet on his blindness have been so often and persistently repeated that they have become alarmingly hackneyed; and when a poet or an author is condemned to that wretched system it is a sure and infallible sign of popularity.

But if I name even all the great authors singly I shall never cease writing. I might pile up a catalogue of names, and append short tail-pieces *ad infinitum*. To mention and to descant upon Homer, Herodotus, Dante, Cervantes, Bacon, Dryden, and Swift, and then retire in a hurried manner, without apology, would be rendering an injustice, and casting an insult upon Plato, Thucydides, Virgil, Locke, Defoe, Pope, Goethe, and Scott, and a hundred other excellent and popular authors whose claims upon our gratitude are manifold. Most of their works

find shelter in our libraries, and are diligently studied, indolently read, or left to gather a top layer of dust, according to the taste of their owner. That we have so much splendid literature within easy reach of all is one of the modern world's stupendous privileges. We do not realise, in any sensible or thankful spirit, the grandeur of our books, neither do we apprehend the costliness of their crusted wealth. Give a man Burns and he will possess a poetical literature not to be matched elsewhere under the same conditions. He may not think so. It is almost certain he will not; and in his inanity and affection for stupid novels and shallow poems will pass by a true and original man of genius, whose songs were of natural fire, and whose melody as free and pure as the mountain air of his own native land. A man must love a book to profit and to eat the heart out of it. If they were treasured and revered more in *reading*, not in mere collecting, their mission would be better accomplished, and more to the purpose.

A good book is a moral force, and it needs a lovable and intelligent reader far more than an excited 'collector,' who has often deeper pockets than sense. Not that I dislike a collector, for he is often a decent creature at the

bottom, especially if one can partially sympathise with his mania. He is a peculiar animal, but a necessary one, and no parasite. He holds a distinct and useful office in the universe of books. If he is censured for his non-reading faculty he should be praised for his preserving one; for the genuine collector, more than any other species of man, spends most time and money to preserve books. He may do it for a selfish purpose, or a piece of vanity; but both are expensive. No man devours catalogues, haunts, or sends commissions to auction rooms from greedy selfishness or idle vanity. He must have some real love for books to prompt his payment of 'fancy' prices. I like to hear of a scarce or rare book bringing a handsome figure under the hammer, if the contents are valuable; but not without. To hear, as we frequently do, of worthless compositions, with sentimental or significant titles, fetching goodly sums is no credit either to the collector's sense or morals, and is to me an abomination. But as in all things, good and bad grow together; and the preservation of books is no exception. We must be thankful to collectors for the former, and wink at their wretched taste in the latter.

Naturally works, in our own tongue or by

British authors, form the percentage in most of our libraries. The greatest difficulty is in selection. The poetical books from Chaucer to Tennyson are illimitable in number. And the same may be said of the prose from the Venerable Bede to John Ruskin. Who but a great reader, or a man of extraordinary critical judgment, understands what to select and what to reject. But libraries are not formed after this method. Indeed they are formed after no higher method than that of 'hearsay,' which is often false, if not deliberately unjust. A man reads that a certain book is in every sense excellent, in fact a breath from the gods, and straightway adds it to his library; he reads that another is worthless trash, and shuns it henceforward as he would a leper. If he had the time, patience, and common sense to read both I do not say these opinions would be entirely reversed in his own mind, but I imagine they would be exceedingly shaken. Southey is now disdainfully neglected, and his works at a discount; yet both his matter and style, in many of his works, are far superior to many modern authors whose first editions are sold at a premium.

But this mode of stocking a library by 'hearsay' sometimes overreaches its own policy, and drops apples of gold unawares. There are some

men who, when a book is abusively condemned, make a principle of looking into it, and often find cause to add it to their stock of treasures. Had we been living in the time of Keats and Shelley it is extremely probable, from the criticisms on their works, we should not have purchased any one of them. Yet how reverently we handle their first editions now, and how gloriously sublime the poetry within! Did not nearly everyone despise our old friend *Sartor Resartus* in the days of his infancy? But now he is sold by the thousand, is the hand-book of the million, and is one of the idols of literature.

With all our infinite multiplicity of books we have a knack of selecting the best. In small libraries of a thousand volumes our great authors are generally well represented, as, indeed, they have an immediate right to be. In purchasing books it is always wisest and most profitable to select the best. Buying a worthless book because it is cheap is a fool's system, if not an indication of madness. Still, a man grows wiser by his mistakes and will not, after a certain course of this bilious medicine, be seduced by cheapness without worth into making a Dogberry of himself. If it affects no cure it is time he cried in agitation, 'O, that I had been writ down—an ass!'

When Johnson entered a library it was always

his custom to gaze musingly upon the many-coloured backs of the volumes collected there, by which he both understood the style of books and the taste of their owner. Most lovers of books display the same habit, and none but they who love, reverence, and live in the atmosphere of books and literature can understand and sympathise with the peculiar bookish feeling which rushes through and elevates the almost more than human heart during such an inspection. There is something in a collection of books which strikes an awe into the inner soul, and for the moment translates us to another sphere. The giant minds of all ages—living and dead—are there, and the spirit struggles with inarticulate speech. To stand in a great library is to stand in the sacred temple of intellect. It is a spiritual discipline. For Nature, man, death, life, and the eternities are there, and a glimpse of the Unknown Mind that embraces all.

I have frequently noticed that when an attendant conducts a stranger to view the reading-room in the British Museum he looks around with mute astonishment. He cannot speak promptly or coherently, being all feeling; and yet, strange wonder, that vast empire of books and that vaster empire invisible have been all read, and many digested, a thousand times over; and, stranger

wonder, they have all been written in this railing world of ours by intelligent or non-intelligent mortal men, who mostly pretended no love for the nature of things, and very little for their brothers on the earth. I wonder not so much at the time and the quantity, but at the patience necessary to produce them. But books, and the writing of books, overcome most virtues as they do vices, and they have actually 'got themselves written,' if under difficulties.

Our books possess some powerful, hidden charm which our sternest humanity cannot resist. They reign with the lofty and sublime majesty of kings, and yet teach and hover round our hearts with the simplicity of a child. They have served the past and made it happier for their existence; they are serving the present with the same result, and are now marching, as with the silent tread of a midnight host, into the ages to come, and will there serve the future and be afforded the same opportunity of increasing its happiness, wisdom, and knowledge. Other generations await them there, and will add fresh laurels to their ever-growing chaplets; generations that will be wiser and in possession of great natural secrets, hitherto concealed from us; generations that will, perhaps, understand them better, and ever stand ready to defend them against all contemptuous fools who sneer without

licence or reason ; generations that, I happily anticipate, will love, reverence, and worship their authors as the heroes and the gods of literature. But no generation will love them with a stronger or purer love than ours, since many among mankind love their books with the wild enthusiasm of a patriot, and the hot intensity of a lover.

Our books are part of our life, and gratitude must be expressed ; therefore I make no apology for what I consider is essentially necessary and just. We pass from the universe of activity, but books remain, and they should have the recognition of patriarchs not for mere age but for genuine worth. I yield my tribute ungrudgingly, and am confident every loving reader whom they have instructed and cheered will never hesitate in the payment of sincere and honest thanks. They do not require them ; but the heart of man is lighter when grateful, and the world merrier. Books throw much sunshine into our clouded life, and, as bookish pagans, let us worship and grow wiser.

MODERN BOOKS

MODERN BOOKS

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As the soft murmur of a summer stream,
Our best books charm, delight our fevered brain,
Fresh from the mart of life, or thought's deep chain ;
And bathe our souls in bliss, so like the dream
Baptised golden. We catch the Poet's gleam
And riot in the music of his strain.
We mark the Author's genius, hail his reign,
And know that some are greater than they seem.

The richest in the tide of modern thought
Is ready to our hands, and educates,
Refreshes, and transforms :—Is hourly bought
By study, labour : Both are famous gates
For knowledge to pass through. Great men are taught
By work, and hold it mightier than the Fates.

MODERN BOOKS.

Some books are to be tasted, others to be swallowed, and some few to be chewed and digested.—BACON.

When the Book is once out the *Rubicon* is past, the Dye is thrown, and the Chance must be ventur'd.—JEREMY COLLIER.

A new book is something in our power: we mount the bench and sit in judgment on it.—HAZLITT.

MODERN publishers have become the saviours of literature. They have done much toward making great authors of all ages known, by bringing their works within easy reach of the people. The dissatisfied may murmur that the publishers do this not for any love of literature or the people, but entirely for their own interest. And why not? Every man to his profession. There is no feasible reason why a publisher should starve in his office to extend the bounds of literature and provide good cheap books for the people. If it is expected, the expectations of the dreamy will never be realised, and especially if we take past publishers as an example. The race of the Murrays

and the Longmans have never starved nor begged bread, and there is no present indication that they ever will.

The critic, who is often, but not always, a living sign-post to literature, is not the sign-post altogether from love. Bread is wanted, and money and gain. Authors, also, do not all write solely from excessive love for literature. Most authors love their profession, but they have some other purpose in writing. They are men—have flesh, blood, bones, spirit, and must live. Johnson's opinion of an author who does not write for gain is well known: 'Sir, he is a fool.' He never liked giving away what in the publishing market would bring him so many current coins of the realm; he much preferred parting with the coins themselves.

If publishers reap substantial benefit—and they do—from the practice of republishing great books, they deserve it; and if they realise a large margin of profit by introducing unknown authors to the world they deserve it also. They made the venture, and every sensible man understands that every speculation is not a success. Publishers, authors, critics, financialists, politicians, have all overbalanced their judgment sometime during their career. Publishers have thrown many casts, have won many, and have lost many. They are

looked upon by numerous sceptics as cold, shrewd, selfish men, with much underlying cunning; but that is altogether a mistake. Why should they venture more than other men? They were once understood to be grasping, covetous, and mean; that vulgar opinion is now gradually dying out. The publisher is not one whit more greedy than the author he publishes for.

Once a young dandy about town threw politics as his cast, and Benjamin Disraeli subsequently became Prime Minister of these realms; but there have been casts which have failed disastrously. Many literary men have perished—neglected and starved. Their works have lived to testify to their genius, but they themselves have gone from off the face of God's earth poorer than beggars, and as wretched. But why discourage any with the failure of others? There is success for all; but it must be won, and won manfully. All men want a hand and not a blow. There are lowering clouds above us all, but why curse some poor wayfarer by continual dinning that they may drop? Rather tell him there are serener, and help him to bathe his eyes in the sunlight that is.

Modern publishers cater for all classes. There is the large-paper for the collector, the usual octavo or duodecimo for the literary student and ordinary reader. Wait a few months, and in

many instances there is the cheap edition for the people.

Large-paper editions are luxuries. They are expensive, as many a collector discovers to his cost at the end of the season. But even then the luscious sound of large-paper is a sufficient antidote to reconcile his perturbed soul with his empty purse. He mouths the term with a keen relish. It is as purest honey to his lips, and as delicious music to his ears. He gloats over the beautiful whiteness of the hand-made paper—when it is hand-made and not imitation—and his eyes dance with smiles at the ungrudging width of the margins.

I have known large-paper copies to be forgeries and shams. A certain book appeared early last year which, because some copies had been printed on hand-made paper, and revelled in a margin no wider than one-fourth of an inch than the ordinary copies, was grandiloquently styled—large-paper. Certainly the book was not by any known author, nor by any particular publisher; neither was it worthy in any way of large-paper supremacy; but no man, be he author or publisher, has any right to deceive and rob the public, and to amass gain by selling *the thing which is not*. Many collectors of large-paper copies reside in the country, and purchase these costly volumes before seeing them. It is these men who are really robbed, and they

have little or no remedy. Every time they glance at the vile tome they suffer from exasperation, and doubtlessly curse author and publisher alike. Fraud from any sharper is unpleasant, but from those whose honesty should be unquestioned it is mental torture and savage anger.

There are some other large-paper copies which are absolutely offensive to the book-lover. I refer to those in which the text is printed, or rather cramped, in the top corner of the page, leaving no upper, and no inner margin, but providing inches of lower and outer margin. A large-paper copy printed in this absurd and ugly fashion could be cropped into an ordinary duodecimo in the twinkling of an eye; and indeed it would look more handsome in that form.

Of the genuine large-paper none can complain. It is a splendid book. A goodly number of them might occupy too much space in the usually small London house, and usurp the place of many old and faithful friends, degrading some to the floor, and others to the first convenient chair. Unfortunately one never obtains the goodly number, and limited space would be no obstacle to their admittance in the library did they walk into the book-case at a less extravagant price. They would be welcome to the cosiest nook, for they afford liberal satisfaction to any book-lover by their beautiful

typography, their splendid hand-made paper, and generous margins.

It is the next class of book which is the popular favourite, not only with the reading public and the man of letters, but with many collectors. The customary octavo, first edition, in the original state, will always hold the primary place in their affections, and will be sought after, year by year, with a keener competition. It is *the book*. And it is well known that most books read better in one state than in another. This applies especially to modern authors. Charles Lamb could only read Beaumont and Fletcher in folio, and Shakespeare in octavo. And who, in our day, can enjoy Tennyson in double columns? He always reads best in the original green. And who can sit down, in a good humour, to a course of the difficult Browning, when not arrayed in his many-coloured garb? I do not love his reprints, but I can always read his first editions. In particular, I can only read and linger over his *Asalando* in the first edition, published on the day of his death. There is a memory attached to it which is neither idle nor absurd. We cannot escape memories if we would. There is a sadness, or a sweetness, or both, clinging to them, which we can never forget. We all have mile-stones in our lives, events and remembrances, which will never cease to influence us.

I treasure the first edition of *Asalandò* more than any other work of Browning's. I read it within a few hours of the poet's death. While thousands were lingering over its pages the hand that had written down his last brave thoughts was lying cold, helpless, and still, in the romantic city of Venice. I saw him lowered into his Abbey grave, and can never cease to remember the indescribable sweetness, the prevailing awe, and the full sadness, 'too deep for tears,' when the choir came to the two powerful lines in his wife's hymn:—

'God strikes a silence through you all,
And giveth his beloved sleep.'

He now mingles his dust with the illustrious and great, for he sleeps close to Chaucer, Spenser, Cowley, and Dryden; but his *Asalandò* will always wield a strange, sad fascination over the hearts of many.

Keats, Shelley, and Tom Hood, to my taste, read best in the early editions published by Moxon, in the old familiar green covers. Richardson, Fielding, Smollett, and Sterne I prefer in the old-fashioned brown calf, and in as many volumes as first published. *The Vicar of Wakefield* can be read almost in any form, but I detest it in small type. The prettier the edition the better, for Goldsmith's picture of the Vicar's fortunes and

misfortunes is one of the choicest gems of English literature. I also have a strong partiality for Scott in the original three or four volumes as printed by Ballantyne and published by Constable. Old plays possess greater charms when bound up singly; and most books of the best modern authors I like in no other dress, except for some special reason, than that given by the publisher. But should any book-lover delight in having his books clothed in elegant and expensive bindings of morocco or calf-extra he is to be complimented, both upon his taste and his pocket. A well-appointed library, with the books in splendid bindings, makes an excellent appearance; but a handsomely bound book is not a good book for reading. That in the publisher's cloth is much better for this purpose.

This preference for a particular edition of a book is not altogether a book-lover's fancy. The unsympathising critic may perhaps consider that point strained a trifle to support my opinion and taste; but what gives pleasure — and much pleasure is derived from preference—is neither idle nor vain. If our unsympathising critic is anything of a reader—he is supposed to be a voracious one, but supposing is often dangerous and unsafe—he, as well as other men, doubtless prefers one edition of an author's book to another, no matter

whether the first, or the last. Indeed the last edition of many books is not unfrequently the best, and in the most readable form. Still the majority of works by modern authors are much to be preferred in the first, not because better in paper or typography, but by reason of higher value ; and because they are first editions. It is in this where a little fancy creeps in. It is not in the reading, but in the possession. This latter confers happiness, distinction, and a proper bookish pride.

All collectors do not seek for first editions. Many are very faulty. We might expostulate with the editor of our great Shakespeare, on this very account, concerning his FIRST FOLIO ; but who would not peruse it diligently thrice over to possess a good, sound, tall copy ? Shakespeare was not first published in folio, but in quarto, and the bookman who could not enjoy them would be dropping into the weakness of second childhood.

We have some noble books, even when restricting ourselves exclusively to those published during the past fifty years. There are many splendid octavos, beautiful duodecimos, and valuable first editions to delight the eye of the collector, to allure his taste, and to fill his shelves. How he searches for them, competes for them, and perhaps, after much patient and impatient waiting ulti-

mately secures them. And what a glorious appearance they make in his handsome bookcases if the collector delights in the beauties of morocco, russia, calf-extra, and gold tooling by Riviere or Zaehnsdorf! Or, if he remains true to the first state, how shabby and insignificant they appear to ignorant and uninitiated; but how beautiful and sublime to the collector, in their faded garment of cloth or original boards. They are cherished fondly, lovingly, and with care. Eventually they will come again under the fatal auctioneer's hammer, to be separated and dispersed, to find fresh homes and new owners as careful as the last, in almost every part of the habitable globe. Such is the destiny of books, and it is a noble one. Their authors die, their collectors die, but they still survive to give sunshine to others, as the years unfold their short months and shorter days.

The cheap book is emphatically the book of the people. It is published to meet the growing demand for good sound literature, made by the educated masses. Education has sharpened their appetite; and the desire and thirst for knowledge, good and interesting reading, is strong upon them, and, indeed, is a passion with many. They hunger for mental food of the right quality, and the modern publisher comes to their aid and floods the market with the best works of the

great authors. Macaulay's *History of England* can be purchased, at discount price, for five shillings and threepence; Carlyle's *Sartor Resartus* for ninepence; Scott's *Waverley* for fourpence-halfpenny; and most of the English poets (out of copyright)—Shakespeare included—for ninepence. If these prices are extravagant and expensive there is the second-hand bookseller remaining, who generally sells at half the published price, and frequently at a cheaper rate. Good books can also be rescued from the outside boxes and stalls for a penny, twopence, threepence, fourpence, or sixpence at the most. Certainly none can starve for want of intellectual food. To take the instance of our greatest living poet, Tennyson, his works are a marvel of cheapness. The whole of them—and the green books have been many—can be purchased in one volume, with portrait, for five shillings and sevenpence-halfpenny. If the second-hand bookshop is visited, occasionally for the small sum of three shillings and sixpence. If the intelligent man or youth cannot even afford this, his two finest works, *In Memoriam* and *Maud*, can, with diligence, be 'picked up' for a shilling a piece, and I have seen poor copies marked at sixpence.

Of course the collector never touches these cheap books by the cheap publisher. He scarcely ever

condescends to cast his keen, searching eyes upon them. When he does it is to compliment the publisher and to ask, 'How is it done?' Certainly no books make a well-appointed library look so ill. Old and shabby books can be welcomed and caressed—they are valuable, and many are bargains—but the cheap reprint must never cross the threshold. Some cannot tolerate a useful *Bohn* unless disguised in a calf jacket. A number of them make a dismal and monotonous appearance, notwithstanding the judgment of the Sage of Chelsea, in which all concur: 'Bohn's Publication Series is the usefulest thing I know.' But it is neither handsome nor pretty.

Cheap books were not published for the collector. He does not want them, and passes them by with an indifferent air. But some eager-eyed lad, athirst for knowledge, walks up to the stall and looks at them longingly and lovingly. Alas! they are not for him. His pockets are bare, and even the very cheapness makes him feel their barrenness more. If they had been expensive he would merely have glanced and passed on. But so cheap, and yet to him so dear! He goes slowly away with a sigh, if not with tears standing in his large, intelligent eyes. When he has saved the few pence necessary to purchase the long-desired book away he runs and eagerly pays for

and secures his prize ; perhaps Shakespeare, Pope, or Shelley ; or maybe Bacon, Addison, or Goldsmith. He is as excited with his small treasure as Lamb and 'Bridget' were with that Folio, *Beaumont and Fletcher*, which he 'dragged home late at night from Barker's in Covent Garden.'

Books have a great amount of heart about them ; they are not all brain, or they could never cast their magical spells about us so powerfully. We are willing to be entangled ; nay, we even court the enchantment, and delight to revel in the substantial but joyful elysium of books. It is an elysium which the gods might envy. It is fascinating, even delicious ; and the vast pleasure afforded is both happy and useful in its purpose. It is not idle, nor silly, nor stupid ; neither is it the pleasure of fools and asses.

It does not take much to make this abode of happiness : a really bookish man can create it almost at any time. But there are seasons when books are more interesting to most men. Granted it is winter—for, with me, books always wield a greater influence, and possess finer charms at that season—it is evening, the blinds are down, the curtains are drawn, the arm-chair pulled up to the cheerful fire, the feet rest upon the fender, the lamp is lit, the surrounding walls are covered with books, and the happy firelight dances merrily

upon their parti-coloured backs. The wind may howl outside, and the snow may drift, but give the book-lover his favourite author—say a play of Shakespeare's ; Tennyson's *Maud* ; Boswell's *Johnson* ; *The Vicar of Wakefield* ; Scott's *Ivanhoe* ; *The Christmas Carol* ; *Adam Bede* ; *The Essays of Elia* ; *The Confessions of an English Opium-Eater* ; or the once despised *Sartor Resartus* ;—give him one of these, and is he not in a moment translated, as on a magic carpet, to another world, where the sorrows of this are forgotten, and the bliss of that entirely surrounds him ? He lives as in the golden city of some beautiful dream. He is with Hamlet in the play-scene ; with Maud in the garden ; with Johnson at the club ; with the good Vicar in the gaol ; with the wounded Ivanhoe and Rebecca in the castle of Front-de-Bœuf ; with Scrooge on his midnight round ; with Adam Bede in his workshop and home ; with Lamb at the South Sea House, at Oxford, or in the pit at old Drury Lane ; with De Quincey in the room of his northern home he has painted so vividly ; or, if reading *Sartor Resartus*, with the bench of Bishops in the House of Lords. These books hold him, fascinate him. The hours flee away, and eternity appears to stand still. He utterly forgets that he is a creature of time and subject to death. His study is his paradise. He can no more resist his books than the

enthusiastic politician his politics, the earnest barrister his briefs, or the skilled surgeon the broken leg. Each to his own sphere, each to his own taste, so long as that which absorbs is honourable, noble, and just.

Modern books alone have brought much happiness into the world, and have engendered a generous spirit in many. Publishers and public go hand-in-hand; and even the poor author, who often thinks he is abused, has his reward. By the admirable system of present publishing every author can obtain full value for his work, or at least market value; for good work can never be paid for in gold. If so, who is to value the works of William Shakespeare? The old haggling between author and publisher is ceasing. Samuel Johnsons do not dine behind screens now. There are poor authors, but not through any fault of their publishers. A reconciliation has taken place, and both are satisfied. Whatever may be said about modern books there never was at any time a more brilliant future than now for the great book. Doubtless, like most great books, it will rise one morning with the lark and make its deserving author famous. Publishers, authors, critics are all waiting for it alike; and England requires a great book to crown the present age. It will come—but when?

KNOWLEDGE.

KNOWLEDGE is severely bought. We hold
Her wealth as love, in bond, and cannot lose
This mightiness of mind ; nor scorn, nor bruise,
What cost renunciation manifold.
It makes the poor man rich, the timid bold ;
Developed to instruct more than amuse ;
Yet will do both, forsooth, and not accuse
The labouring brain, in worthiness grown cold.

Secure her temple stands throughout all time
The master-piece of giants, who were bred
By Nature as her sons, and grew sublime.
Her strength is adamant, her beauty wed
With usefulness, and blooms in any clime ;
And Wisdom hails her as her maidenhood.

KNOWLEDGE.

Our knowledge doth but show our ignorance.—FELLTHAM.

A man always makes himself greater as he increases his knowledge.—JOHNSON.

Who loves not Knowledge? Who shall rail
Against her beauty? May she mix
With men and prosper! Who shall fix
Her pillars? Let her work prevail!—TENNYSON.

THE beauties and advantages of knowledge are manifold. No one department is to be compassed fully by any single human mind. Indeed it never has been accomplished even by any one of the intellectual Titans; for is not knowledge illimitable and eternal, with imaginary poles centred and fixed in the infinity of things never to be discovered or revealed? It is common with theologians—and with those who are not theologians, but mock-religionists, with the breath of scandal on their tongues—it is common with these to contend that death ushers the escaped soul of the mortal into a perfect completion of knowledge. It may be true and it may not. Both states are questionable. It

is not only idle but reckless to assert or to pretend any certain knowledge as to what will transpire beyond the relentless portals of death. The invisible destroyer has a firm grip and a close one, and is shrouded in a divinity of darkness which no human eye can penetrate, or even enter, without enduring the severe penalty of never returning. It were superior wisdom to secure (so far as our limited condition of life permits) correct knowledge of this state of existence, which yields little but with manful labour and wearisome toil; than to struggle with walls of adamant, which in the end will only break the head and not mend it. The Christian religion is the herald of a brighter dawn, and not the interpreter; and if religionists would devote more time and attention to the purity of their life, and less to the vague uncertainties of an unknown environment, it would be better both for themselves and for the world, which world is pestered and pelted with inane theological jargon, not of the useful kind but of the non-useful, which trades in bigotry, hot arguments, rash assertions, and intemperate language, founded on nothing sounder than the hollow and demented fantasies of a heated imagination.

Edward Irving was no mean man. Carlyle, who knew him intimately and had a rare insight into the characters of men, called him 'a man of antique

heroic nature.' He had a fine intellect, a beautiful creative fancy, and splendid oratorical powers, but ruined all by a wretched, degenerate system of fanaticism. He could save himself from his Church ; could partly do so from fashion—at least he made a long stand against it—but not from prophecy. It has wrecked the lives of many men. It leads, nay, urges to folly, madness, if not death. When a man begins to preach prophecy he is beyond hope, is lost in a cloud of inanity, and buried beneath a heap of destructive arguments.

But sufficient and more than sufficient of imaginative knowledge, and especially of the modern kind, which deserves being drummed off the face of the earth. I return with all haste, and with every sign of gladness, to *terra firma*, and shall struggle manfully against any strong seductive thought tempting me to forget I am still a mortal. I have no desire, with these fleshy habiliments, to ride on the wings of the wind, and, if prophecy assails, I trust I have ample courage and common sense to smother it—like 'Mr Punch' does the old departing years—with an extinguisher.

The thirst and craving after knowledge is inherent in our nature. It is a natural desire from which we cannot escape. We long to know that which we do not know, and, knowing it, increase

knowledge. From babyhood to old age the same continual longing—in different degrees—exists, and never at any time utterly dies out. In very early years the child will pick out her doll's eyes to see what they are made of, how they are fastened, and what is behind ; then, having ascertained these points, will next proceed to dissect the body, perhaps not anatomically, but that matters little. So long as the body is dissected, laid open, and analysed, the child is satisfied that it is filled with sawdust, has gained knowledge, is three inches taller, and ten degrees wiser for the future. It is the same with years. Bacon, a few days before his death, stuffed a fowl with snow to ascertain a scientific point ; Darwin was wresting secrets from Nature till he died ; and De Quincey, when turned seventy years of age or more, was preparing to write the *History of England* in twelve volumes, thinking nothing of the vast knowledge necessary, and little dreaming that he was an old man worn out with bodily suffering and literary toil. But his *History of England* was never written. Death asserted her awful rights, and banished him from books and men. She marbled his mountain brow, quieted his mighty heart, rested his weary brain, and stilled his attenuated hand—a hand the greatest might have kissed with reverence and honour, since it

had written so elaborately, eloquently, morally, truthfully, and excellentiy. Thirsting after knowledge, and eager to disseminate it, he died with its myriad many-coloured glories, and is remembered by thousands with veneration, affection, and genuine esteem.

All men, and particularly those whose office it is to teach, should strive to attain correct knowledge. It is the groundwork of all true teaching, and the prime source of wisdom. Better a little that is perfect than a universal world of that which is defective, and therefore unreliable and misleading. Not that universal knowledge is to be despised. On the contrary, it should be eagerly sought and treasured up in the memory with all possible care, so long as it is trustworthy and sound, and useful in its object. The knowledge that is useless is *no* knowledge. It is nothing but chaff, dust, and rubbish, stored up for a purpose, but usually a questionable one: to pander conceit, to heighten fancy, or to poison a heart already too prone to corrupting influences.

It is the possession of honest, accurate, and diffusive knowledge, allied to a fruitful mind, that renders one man greater than another. Gold is generally understood to create this inequality. In the commonest sense it is true, but not in the highest. Gold may furnish a richer

dress, command more respect from grovelling creatures, or even purchase a finer polish of artificial politeness; but it is knowledge which strictly distinguishes the superiority of one mind above another, and, if heightened by genius, dreads no competitor, and has no equal. A fashionable lord with small brains is no match, indeed is no proper companion, for a man with a mind well stocked with exact and serviceable knowledge of history, men, and things, and utilised for the benefit and better information of the people. Our great authors will always retain a warmer place in the affections of their countrymen, and occupy a finer niche in history than our rich nobles, despite the baronial halls and broad acres of the latter. Our great writers have shed the pure light of knowledge in divers hues upon our national mind, and have added mines of wealth to the magnificent literature of our land; while many of our nobles have intrigued, equivocated, and stooped to almost every species of villainy, but have had their vices emblazoned on their family tombs as virtues, being extremely fortunate in their epitaph writers, who willingly told lies for them, when dead, for half-a-crown, as they themselves had done, when living, to secure or to save a place.

What can England give to her people as an

equitable exchange for the mind of Shakespeare as displayed in his works? Nothing can purchase it but a mind of equal greatness; and she has never another. No, not one, did she search with a lynx eye the long line of her kings, the splendid ranks of her nobles, and the richest minds in her literature. It would appear broad comedy in any one to attempt an exchange, or to inquire for a mind of equivalent dimensions, and yet many a puny creature of a corrupt court has considered himself a greater man than our immortal poet who, by divine right of genius, ranks higher than the loftiest or the mightiest, from Saxon Alfred's time down to our own. But knowledge and genius were ever slighted by those who should have been the first to welcome their manifestation in others. Homer wandered in the isles of Greece like a common mendicant, reciting his sublime Epic. Dante was compelled to sojourn in exile, and composed his *Divine Comedy* there, and not in his beloved native city of Florence. Anaxagoras and Galileo were punished for affirming what they believed to be true—the first with banishment, and the second with imprisonment and other foolish measures. And to turn to England, which interests us more, how many men of fine genius and excellent knowledge have dragged out their wretched existence in neglect and poverty, and

have died by starvation, if not a more violent end. It is too late to afford them assistance now ; but were they living at the present day, and known as great men with superior understanding and extensive learning, they would be surfeited with endless feasting and rose-coloured praise, and suffocated with crowded drawing-rooms and mock embraces.

When De Quincey, in his hardest days, first tasted food after a period of cruel abstinence, he was fearful that he should choke, like Otway, and in consequence broke his prolonged fast with mincing care. Thousands in our time would be only too glad to furnish him with food and shelter, would eagerly supply him with plates of soup, cut his mutton longitudinally, and make him happy for the evening by placing a quart decanter of ruby-coloured laudanum at his elbow to stimulate and refresh him, and would readily sit up all night to listen to his silvery stream of talk and widespread knowledge.

But the world is not always at fault concerning the inattention paid to her indigent men of letters, and cannot be censured on De Quincey's account. The Opium-Eater endured extreme poverty and intense suffering that had nothing whatever to do with the outside world. We could not expect it to befriend a wandering lad in 'stony-hearted' Oxford Street, who had done nothing to fore-

shadow his future genius. There are too many wandering and penniless lads for the world to caress, or to select one as her especial favourite. She is too accustomed to pass them by with a vacant stare to discern any superiority of mind or feeling in any single one. Yet that one poor lad, Thomas de Quincey, wandering round and round Soho Square with the peripatetic Ann, had vast stores of learning and knowledge stowed away in his mind, which would have reflected credit on a professor, and, what is of more importance, had the genius to apply it, which professors often lack.

Adversity is an awful instructress, but she imparts truer views of life than many less terrible in aspect. She taught De Quincey to write one of the most fascinating, interesting, original, and humane books of his time, or indeed of any time. The feeling was intense, and the diction elaborate, beautiful, and in places sublime. He has our sympathy almost entirely throughout. Ann of Oxford Street is no longer a peripatetic, but an angel of solemn beauty and generous tenderness, sent on God's earth expressly to rescue him from an early and pitiful death, which service accomplished, she departed as she came, wistfully and noiselessly, and henceforth was lost to De Quincey in the infinity of roaring London, or in the un-

broken silence of a merciful grave, where ruffians could not brutalise nor poverty disturb.

Stern necessity increases knowledge every way, and knowledge in its turn increases care. Even the process of acquiring it is not without its pain. It may be mental, physical, or social. There are innumerable annoyances to distract the eager student after knowledge, which other less intelligent mortals with coarser sensibilities are not capable of feeling. The mere reading of the memoirs of our men of letters is sufficient to reveal how multiplied, intense, and intricate their sufferings were. The mental torture and bodily pain some of them endured was exquisite in its fineness. No men, short of those who have felt the fire of the stake and faggot, have ever experienced anguish so keen or torments so numerous and distressing. Indeed those literary memoirs are the martyrologies of literature, yet out of all this physical and intellectual hardship, suffering, and misery, rose works, noble, magnificent, transcendent, sublime, immortal.

Too many of our poets and authors were cradled in poverty and trained by the same hard hand. They were taught by the Furies, and not by the Fairies, as the uninstructed might easily be led to imagine from the excellence and beauty of their productions. The deepest sensibilities of their

natures were touched as by a master-hand, and their works swell with the finest harmony in consequence. The sublime pathos in Goldsmith's *Deserted Village* was drawn from his own desolate heart, which had been swamped with the bitterness of human life. For genuine affection, intensity of feeling, and depth of humanity, his lines on his friend, Edward Purdon, though poor in the strict sense of poetry, are unequalled by anything he ever wrote :

‘ Here lies poor Ned Purdon, from misery freed,
Who long was a bookseller’s hack ;
He led such a damnable life in this world
I don’t think he’ll wish to come back.’

He recited this epitaph at the Globe to a few chosen friends, and the last line he repeated two or three times in an undertone to himself—‘ *I don’t think he’ll wish to come back*’—as though sorrowing over the bitter existence of his dead friend. He estimated the acuteness of Purdon’s sufferings and the hardness of his struggles by his own. He knew, no man better, the wretched life of a bookseller’s hack, and the last line thrice repeated was the channel of the strong pathos of his deep-feeling nature. It was a small tribute to the memory of Purdon, and a fine one for his own. Goldsmith’s epitaph might be engraved on his memorial tablet in this one sad line drawn from the well-springs of

his own heart: '*I don't think he'll wish to come back.*' And who, when contemplating the miseries of some of our men of letters, can forget the faltering voice and starting tear of brave old Samuel Johnson, stern moralist and sworn foe to sentimentality, as he repeated those two famous lines from his *Vanity of Human Wishes*:

' What ills the scholar's life assail,
Toil, envy, want, the patron, and the gaol.'

Like Goldsmith, and many more, he too well understood the terrible penalty of a light purse and an empty stomach.

By these reasons of penury, suffering, anguish, distress afflicting many of our greatest men of letters it is painful to read their biographies. Still it is a wholesome course of reading for any one of intelligence to pursue. Much of their wretchedness is more than counterbalanced by the mighty efforts and tremendous struggles they waged against the adverted face of Fortune, who would be wooed by great tests, and not suffer a single smile until her hard and difficult discipline had been endured and borne with the strength and nobility of heroes. We are thankful that in many instances long years of weary waiting and neglect were crowned with success, and even reverential admiration. Poverty could neither break nor crush. In

patience they were strong, and in perseverance invincible. If many now sleep in Westminster Abbey, surrounded by the dust of our most illustrious, noble, and great, we can only regret their recognition and honours were in some cases posthumous. A grave in the temple of greatness is a poor reward for years of literary struggle and patient courage. Genius requires nothing so much as a just return. She cares little for a noble one. That in the course of things must follow, though late. It is inevitable, but not of her seeking. Genius creates every honour she is endowed with. She honourably earns them, and never sues or begs for what is her indisputable right. Thomas Carlyle sought nothing in any sense national, and refused everything national but the admiration of the people ; but who of this century is now greater ? Men of brilliant genius, who possess the key of knowledge, natural or acquired, and unlock whole fields of unexplored thought, and teach what is beautiful, and true, and good, deserve all honours. There is nothing too great, too high, or too reserved for their acceptance, whether conferred in life or in death.

Knowledge is not a creation, but a discovery. Certainly creations may be erected upon the discovery. Even Shakespeare created the beautiful characters of his women upon knowledge already

discovered ; upon his deep and intimate acquaintance with the human heart, aided and embellished by the native genius of his own stupendous mind. Knowledge must be sought, not made, or error and hypocrisy will ensue. It may be increased in many ways, but, whatever method is employed, varied difficulties must be endured, and certain sensations deeply felt. Perhaps the knowledge gained by the disgusting system of inquisitiveness is the most painful and humiliating to the gainer, and leaves more misery and bitterness behind. The gentle mother of all our race paid dearly for her inquisitive folly, and has bequeathed to us an undesired legacy of moral havoc and ruin we might upbraid her with, if not so chivalrous in forgiveness ! We do not reproach her so much as her nature. In all her love, beauty, and perfection she was but a woman. But I am meandering in fatal gardens, where the roses blow, and the violets peep, and must hasten my return into the highway of literature, or, in my weakness, I may be in danger of revealing the Philosopher's stone, which must remain a close secret at any cost, as a stimulant to other minds in the future, not yet developed.

An eavesdropper is a contemptible creature. It is somewhat a satisfaction that they never hear any better description of their meanness. If they listen, the penalty is severe, for they are rewarded

with a cup of gall, brimful and overflowing. They increase knowledge, but at an alarming sacrifice. The dignity of their nature is renounced; they learn their true characters, which, to intensify the sting, are, perhaps, portrayed by a malicious tongue, and repeated in a hundred ears.

Closely allied to this method of increasing knowledge and bitterness at the same moment is that of suspicion. It is a despicable method. Any knowledge gained by this stupid but evil process is generally to the discredit of the suspecter, and redounds to the advantage and honour of the suspected. To be fluttered and harrowed by a thousand torments of suspicion in the breast must be wearying, poignant, and bitter; and, if the nature is otherwise noble and open to conviction, must, on learning their suspicions are cruel fallacies, be intensely remorseful, and crush the heart with a mountain of misery.

One of the best, truest, and noblest ways to increase knowledge is by observation; indeed almost the only way concerning natural processes and events now transpiring, not casually or fitfully, but continually and intently. There is more reliable and useful knowledge to be learnt and wrested from Nature, life, men, and things, by a patient and close observation, than by any other manner possible, unless we except books,

which are the reflections of men who have passed their lives in observation and study. But any degree of fresh knowledge is to be learnt, not from books, but entirely by observation; and there is new knowledge to be wrested from the firm grip of Nature, as science reveals, every day.

The cardinal secret and success of Dickens was his close and intelligent observation. His characters would not stand out so transparently as they do had he not observed human life so acutely and well. His perambulations of the London streets by gaslight, and his peeping into cottage-windows, was not idle curiosity, but actual labour, which was not fruitless when a new book appeared from his master-hand.

It is the same with all men who observe. Their knowledge is increased a hundredfold, be he statesman, orator, scientist, philosopher, poet, artist, author, or mechanic. The observing man will ever be the best teacher, and execute the finest work. Superior observation ensures genuine recognition as surely as brilliant genius is the highway to lasting fame.

As observation is the greatest teacher of the present, so are books of the past. The knowledge and history of the world is locked up in our books, to be transplanted at leisure into our minds. They are its ancient pillars, which defy

both men and time alike. They stand for ever, being solid at the base and firm in the shaft. Like the long, slender columns in the nave of Westminster Abbey they bear the weight of centuries, and fear neither storms, nor tempests, nor the slumbering ages as yet hidden in the bosom of the future. Our books are in reality the grandest source of past knowledge at our command. Is it history, philosophy, poetry, biography, or any other department of literature, our books contain all. The mind of Plato is ours as readily as the mind of Shakespeare. The varied, pleasant, and easily-digested works of Plutarch are as free of access to us as those of Macaulay. Thucydides is as common as Gibbon, and Gibbon as Grote. Indeed most of our great authors are within the reach of all. Turn where we will in literature the vast wealth of knowledge of the overlapping ages is garnered up for our instruction, edification, intelligence, utility, and satisfaction. There is no stint of intellectual, historical, or philosophical worth to be anywhere detected. Magnificent, sublime, and immortal works, radiating with the hues of many-coloured knowledge, stand on millions of library shelves.

If a man is dull with the most elaborate and transcendental minds of genius at his elbow, and deserves anything, it is whipping. Not that a

man ought always to be reading. It is not necessary that he should ; and he cannot do so if he is to read well, remember and digest. Some little time must be allowed for the arduous feat of intelligent thinking. But if a man, surrounded with books, is dull when afforded every opportunity for reading, thinking, writing, grumbling, or growling, he must have a radical defect somewhere ; it may be in the brain, the liver, or, what is more probable, in his luxury of idleness, and whipping is the only satisfactory course of medicine for that consuming disease. If he does not care to learn how Homer wrote, or Alexander fought ; how Demosthenes or Cicero pleaded ; how Bruce won Bannockburn, or Cromwell dissolved the Long Parliament ; if he is not attracted by the *Inferno* of Dante, or Milton's *Paradise Lost* ; by the philosophy of Bacon, or the plays of Shakespeare ; by Goethe's *Faust*, or the songs of Burns ; by the poetry of Shelley, or the rugged truthfulness of Carlyle ; if none of these great transactions and mighty authors have any interest for him there are myriads of other excellent and transcendental works teeming with correct knowledge, and brilliant with the splendour of genius. Even Cervantes with his *Don Quixote*, Defoe with his *Robinson Crusoe*, and Swift with *Gulliver's Travels*, will not fail to teach, instruct, interest,

amuse, and even increase knowledge if all others fail. Then there is Boswell's *Johnson*, and if that is of no avail the dull blockheads are beyond the art of whipping, and are past redemption, since it is a book for the million, food for years, reflection for a lifetime, and for literary knowledge not to be surpassed, or even equalled by any one book throughout the entire range of biographical literature, ancient or modern.

Knowledge is requisite for all; and in our nineteenth century tremendously requisite if a man would be in any degree successful in any profession. To rise to dignity, trust, honour and supremacy, it is the first necessity and the last, so long as a strict integrity is maintained. Any attempt to climb the hard stairs of Fortune and to unlock her resisting portals without this golden key of knowledge would be as futile as it would be laborious and foolish. Fortune will yield nothing unless an auspicious propitiation is offered, either as a duty or a sacrifice, no matter which so long as given. Many men have snatched fame—so-called—from her sunlit brows, and transplanted it to their own, by trickery, cunning, and even by the low and disgusting art of puffery. In our time the competition for worth and recognition is every day growing keener, and in consequence the future will reward more by merit

knowledge, and genius, or I am a lame prophet. There will always be successful shams; learning will ever be depressed, and genius neglected, but the instances will be fewer than in the past. Fame will be estimated at its true worth, and time will yield justice to all; and her weight will always be thrown into the scale of knowledge rightly founded, correct, and tempered with wisdom. The worthless will be suppressed and silenced with a contemptible forgetfulness, while the worthy will be rewarded by an honourable fame, which will be as sincere as it will be lasting. Knowledge is a sure test, and her giants are the sons of merit, and the real teachers of mankind. True she is subordinate to wisdom, but she is her first step, her main support, and can never utterly collapse unless the entire fabric of the universe tumbles into ruins.

STATESMEN

GREAT England reigns—is mistress of the earth :
Her statesmen are her safeguards ; they have braved
A thousand storms for her renown, and saved
Her honour from reproach. They gave her worth ;
In them her royal greatness has its birth,
And is maintained 'gainst Time, which has enslaved
Illustrious Empires in his chains, and paved
A way for others to his mighty girth.

Do they retain a steady faith in Truth,
And fiery hatred of all worthless laws ;
Her people will grow nobler, and forsooth
Will exercise their freedom with applause.
The man who suffers weakness is uncouth,
And has no right to wreck his country's cause.

STATESMEN.

Theseus.—I wonder if the lion be to speak.

Demetrius.—No wonder, my lord : one lion may, when many asses do.—SHAKESPEARE.

Of all that, to the sage's survey,
This world presents of topsy-turvey,
There's nought so much disturbs his patience,
As little minds in lofty stations.—MOORE.

We must have more wisdom to govern us, we must be governed by the Wisest, we must have an Aristocracy of Talent.—CARLYLE.

THE future stretches before our feet like a vast and invisible sea, whose immensity has no limit and is bordered by no shore. To all mortals, godlike or otherwise, the soft summer murmur of its rippling waves is not heard, and its strong roaring tides of autumn are hushed in sleep. Its infinite surface is dark, and to human eyes no penetration is permitted. Events are evolving there of which we cannot, in the slightest perceptible manner, comprehend the effects. They are buried in a profundity of darkness, as deeply and as surely as the lost history of the past.

The far-seeing statesman anticipates, and even conceives the end of things political from the beginning. To him, as to all others, the future is concealed, but if there is no cross conflicting road, his opinion is fixed, unwavering, and to weaker intellects, prophetic. Burke's attitude toward the French Revolution is well known, but did not his prognostications prove themselves veritable and sound? And are not many political principles of all parties the principles which Carlyle advocated so dauntlessly in his books, and for which he was scouted by friends, and held up as an eccentric enthusiast and reckless madman by critical enemies? His *then* fantastical theories are to-day common-place facts. Undoubtedly some of his ideas have as yet proved futile, but we cannot forecast the social and political history of the next fifty years. I am not surprised that some of his opinions remain unfulfilled, but rather astonished that so many have been so practically recognised and verified; and yet not astonished, when I remember the generous sympathy and lofty common sense underlying his huge humour and wild diction.

A statesman, more than any man, urgently requires a far-seeing vision. He reads the future by the past. Even the student of history is, in

some measure, a statesman. He perfectly understands that certain historical effects were the fruit of certain historical causes. And in similar modern difficulties could often propound the remedy more wisely than many 'honourable gentlemen' who sit in St Stephen's. There is nothing so useful to our statesmen as a thorough knowledge of history, and especially the history of our own country. The great Marlborough intriguing at Court, or fighting his battles in foreign lands, found time to study the course of English history in the plays of William Shakespeare. It was not an inglorious attempt, and was better than none. The man who is intimately acquainted with his Shakespeare is no fool. He has been taught by England's great teacher, and is in possession of untold wealth. If some of our modern statesmen, or statesmen so-called, knew the history of their own country more familiarly, if only from the works of William Shakespeare, they would not only be more superior men, but would be of more liberal benefit to their constituents, for whom they pretend to legislate. Even Hodge, with his horny hand, down in the quiet village, apprehends there is more talk than knowledge, and is disgusted with the sitting member, who speaks so blandly, and promises so largely. From the speeches—manufactured in a churn—Hodge daily expects the dawn-

ing of the age of gold ; but it never dawns, and he is henceforth free with his denunciations. If none will be blunt, and speak honestly, he will. But alas ! at the next election all is overturned by the loud huzzas and infinite brandishing of hats.

Where shall we find statesmen who are fully and clearly acquainted with the course of events from Henry VIII. downwards ? Statesmen who, even with the page of history before them, can distinctly follow their rise, tendency, and influence ? Men of this historical metal are in a sad minority in both Houses ; for certainly very few display an extensive and sure knowledge of history in their speeches. They are at a loss for historical parallels, unless Mr Gladstone, or two or three others, afford one in advance.

To read a modern political speech in our morning paper is a rigorous performance, and requires no ordinary degree of courage and patient effort. It is often nothing more than a drivelling piece of long-windedness, a wretched straining after gnats, or a deliberate personal blackening of character. But this last species of speech-making is more often observed in the local paper than the daily. To the readers of the former it is either honey or gall, and is commented upon as a piece of divinity, false

or true, according to political taste. Still any kind of parliamentary utterance, devoid of knowledge or common sense, is neither healthy nor useful, and would, for all parties concerned, be better unsaid. The intolerable nuisance does not conclude here. The inevitable reporter transfers it to innumerable papers, and wastes the time, raises the bile, and exasperates the minds of political and non-political thousands.

Very few men, in or out of Parliament, but especially *in*, are extensively acquainted with the history of Ireland; but that does not deter uninstructed thousands, and certain shallow 'honourable gentleman,' from prating loudly of her wrongs, and gesticulating wildly on behalf of justice to her people. They are destitute of all knowledge concerning our poor sister Isle but what they have learnt from recent speeches and leading articles; and cannot probe into the secret of her poverty, sufferings, insults, grievances, and oppressions. Can any parliamentary automaton, sitting in St Stephen's, legislate for that unhappy country, or any other country, when ignorant of its political, ecclesiastical, and social history? And yet if constant opening of mouths, straining of jaws, and bellowing like bulls of Bashan, with the usual accompaniment of awkward arms thrown about after the manner of wind-mill swifts—if this

parliamentary conduct possesses any virtue of legislation, Ireland's abuses would have been redressed, and her people happy and contented long since. But happily, or unhappily, legislation is wrought in the quietude of the study rather than on the platform of the mob orator, or in the Parliament of endless talk and little progress.

A brave, bold Oliver Cromwell, with an active principle in him, could command parliamentary oratory to cease. His was the heart and the courage to say audibly—audible unto the confines of this nineteenth century, and all centuries—‘Take this bauble away!’ A man of small speech, but swift action, was this Oliver. Neither Mr Speaker, nor his honourable Commons, had any sanctity in his eyes. ‘Gentlemen, I am weary of your confused babble. Begone! The Parliament is dissolved.’ Brave old Oliver, with his divine faculty of silencing Long Parliaments and magpies in doublets. England has a mighty admiration for his genius now,—thanks to Thomas Carlyle. St Stephen's would have profited greatly by Oliver's presence of late years. He would have found a remedy for every strait, and a mode of quieting certain members suffering from brain fever of the worst type.

If Parliaments had the good sense to digest past events, they would have derived benefit

from Cromwell and his transactions long since. But unfortunately Parliaments, like all species of humanity, are wise in their own knowledge and native greatness, and will not learn, much more digest, and hence the slow and disordered process of legislation. The age is not past for noble Parliaments, or noble statesmen, if they would only allow themselves time to be noble. No man can expect to reach the magnificent position of William Pitt in a day. We never shall have another prime minister at twenty-four. Genius requires experience to temper it.

We are always hopeful of better Parliaments and wiser statesmen, being a hopeful nation; but we shall have neither till greater and surer knowledge enforces less clap-trap. The mere reading of blue books can profit little, unless a man reads those other blue books—the histories of our nation—which give the rise, the glory, and the transcendent position of our country; which illustrate the struggles of the ecclesiastical with the kingly power; the constitutional with the monarchical; the exacting of the Magna Charta from King John; the wringing of the Petition of Rights from Charles I.; the Commonwealth under Cromwell; the Revolution and the Settlement of the Protestant Succession under the Prince of Orange. Ours is a great country, and has a

splendid history. And it is a terrible disgrace to the statesman who does not know it. Who among the rank and file of those who sputter parliamentary eloquence could even give the substance of Magna Charta or the Petition of Rights? I am afraid the number is too few to clothe with figures.

When Burke sat in Parliament, no matter what question came before the House, he was already informed of its history, and had more real and useful knowledge to lay before the Commons of England than any other member. On all constitutional or foreign difficulties, little or great, he turned his learning to parliamentary use. When America, India, and the French Revolution absorbed the House, and indeed the nation, he was the one man armed at all points with precedents and accurate knowledge. Many people think knowledge is born with a man, but it is their own ignorance that leads them astray. Burke's learning was dug out of the common ore. He had no aids, or cross-cuts, unless he manufactured them himself. His mind was enlightened and enlarged by patient effort and ceaseless labour, as became a statesman, and a man. We have so few Burkes, because so few take Burke's trouble and sift the facts of history for themselves.

It would be no unwise or unrighteous law, if a novel one, were every candidate for Parliament compelled to pass an examination as to his fitness for the high honour he covets. If we did not have better parliaments, at least we should have more sensible ones, did every member thus qualify himself to sit and vote in the sacred precincts of Westminster. I say sacred, for can the place where our constitution has been so gloriously wrought be otherwise to an Englishman proud of his country? All just constitutions, with small exceptions, are sacred to the people; if not they might be unmade with all violence at any moment. The constitution that is not respected will yield neither happiness nor peace. Commerce will suffer, trade will be stagnant, and the prevailing discontent will bring danger and destruction in its train. A revolution must take place; it is inevitable. It is the prime duty of the statesman to so make, or reform the constitution, that it is respected, and even revered.

All laws, natural, physical and constitutional, are sacred in their essence. Whoever breaks them must pay the penalty of his fault or indiscretion. There is no escape. A man may think them sacred, or not sacred; of God, or the Devil, according to his disposition and environment—but why is he punished if not sacred? No man was

ever punished for effecting good, except in dark and bigoted times; or when his cause was not understood. No man is treated unjustly, or arbitrarily, in the strict point of law, unless through a miscarriage of justice, which is sometimes unavoidable.

A medical man has to first qualify himself before he can practise upon our physical system. True, there is the quack, but if he commits an error, what then? And an ecclesiastic must also qualify himself before he can administer to our spiritual system. It is the same with all professions. Preparation is insisted on. And is it unreasonable or foolish that a man should be qualified whose duty it is to make or unmake our laws, which are the foundation and mainstay of our constitution and national liberty? We have a State Church, why not a State Parliament? or, at least, a qualified one, since some are seeking for the disestablishment of the former.

There are many sitting on the green benches who are totally unfit. The country squires who once sat, and even slept upon them have mostly disappeared. They also were not 'fit,' but their votes counted in Pitt's or any other ministry. In our time they have been replaced by the working man. A shade of improvement, and a great many of equality, but no more. A parliament composed entirely of working men would neither be a wise

nor a useful one. But of that we are in no danger. These men, as men, are admirable, and I have no fault to find with them as being earnest in seeking to better the condition of their fellow-workmen.

The parliamentary working men know exactly how they and their 'mates' are situated. But can they legislate for them? It is questionable if they can fathom and unravel the intricate circumstances and events which have led to some of the grievances of the working man; and I am certain, with their own unassisted minds, it would be too hard a problem for them to solve the difficult way out. They could not do so unless deeply immersed in the inner policy of the rise and progress of the working class in England. That class, as a class, is the finest in the world. Some few individual members may make brilliant statesmen—a Cardinal Wolsey even—but they will naturally be few, for many reasons. If the parliamentary working man began earlier there would be greater hope; on their present system there can be but little. I have a great respect and just esteem for the English peasant mind. No man can have a finer feeling of reverence, a loftier one of admiration, or a deeper sense of gratitude for the peasant mind of Shakespeare, of Burns, and Thomas Carlyle. It is divinely significant that these three great

writers came from the working class, but, unlike the generality of the modern parliamentary working men, they were men of genius—indeed giants in genius—who can only dawn upon mankind once in a century.

No one can contend that the average working man, or the wisest parliamentary working man, is on a level with Shakespeare, Burns, or Carlyle. An assertion so wild would condemn the asserter as a madman. With a great mind and liberal opportunity a man may qualify himself for almost any profession—a parliamentary one not excepted. But every working man sitting in Parliament does not revel in the luxury of a mind whose original capacity is beyond reproach ; neither has he had, with his employment, that leisure time, which is golden, to prepare himself in any large measure for the responsible office of statesman. Still he professes to be one, and frequently without sufficient strength and breadth of mind to grasp and comprehend the great political system of England. No man has a right to form part of our legislature if he is weak in intellect and deficient in knowledge. He may not be a working man, but a nobleman. Clothes and wealth constitute no integral part of the mind, unless to make it weaker.

The working man is the strength and backbone of our constitution. Let him read and continually

study the policy and progress of the nations from the earliest times, let him become saturated in the political, ecclesiastical, judicial, and social history of our realm, and he will then be more able than at present to legislate for his fellows, and also for Great Britain in its entirety. Personally I should feel that Parliament would be better constituted, and finer tempered, with an ample sprinkling of such self-taught and fully able men.

Carlyle long since urged, in his peculiar language, that the greatest, the loftiest, and the *ablest* mind should always govern the nation. That is not only a Carlylean truth but a self-evident and a natural one, be the able man aristocrat, autocrat, democrat, monarch, or working man. As a statesman the shallow-minded nobleman is as objectionable as the shallow-minded labourer, and even more so. The former is a deliberate sham, while the latter is merely a blind one, as he, at all times, earnestly endeavours to discharge his political duties in an honest manner. If the mind is worthless nothing else can make amends. It is the one quality in the nature of man that is superior to aught else. It hails from the eternal immensity, whither it returns.

A statesman with no mind is contemptible. I do not know anyone more so, unless it is the statesman with a corrupt one, which is damnable.

It is madness, nay criminal, for either to attempt to govern. The latter has died a legal death, but the former still survives to inflict and hamper us with his inane jargon, notwithstanding the scorn of thousands, which is not unfrequently very prominently launched at his vain efforts. The time is past for the vacant mind to sit upon a parliamentary bench, to sleep like a cabman on his box, or to stare like a lad at a pantomime. To laugh, cheer, and vote when others give the lead is not legislation; it is not even an apology for that difficult art. It is simply an automatic system of the not very perplexing feat of following one's own nose, which nose is a parliamentary one, and for the time being the leader of a party. Laws manufactured on this patent mechanical principle are usually nothing more universal than individual ideas—sound or unsound—developed by a few, and entered on the statute book of England; or they are nothing sounder than bags of wind. Better, far better, insist upon a committee of one, that one being the *ablest*, sitting in his own study, and create our laws for us, than tolerate this other wretched system of barrel-organism. England does not require dummies, least of all to legislate, but men. No dummy, though ever so beautifully chiselled in whitest marble, ever gave us a law or a semblance of one. He might be formed of the

commonest clay, or even a lump of putty, for any service he can be to us in that capacity.

The statues of our splendid statesmen, standing in St Stephen's or Westminster Abbey, are of no utility whatever to the legislature, except, if possible, to strike a spirit of emulation in some of those dull dotards who sometimes pass through these places and call to mind the great measures and glorious victories achieved by their once living representatives, always providing, of course, that they know sufficient political history to remember any one famous constitutional measure they passed into law. The statues stand there in a state of inanity, and can take no part in the proceedings of Parliament. The men whom they represent have finished their labours, they have passed noble laws, have created the people of their country the first nation in the world, and rendered England glorious—the mistress of the seas, and the arbitress of nations. They have journeyed into the 'undiscovered country,' whence none return, with the thanks and applause of grateful millions ringing in their ears. This spirit of gratitude is even now continued, and will be caught up and carried forward into the silences of the future. Their work is done, and henceforth they are as noiseless as the ages, and we look for nothing more at their hands.

What we do look for, and naturally expect, is

that our modern statesmen should be generous, wise, upright, just, and noble. England is great, her name and dignity everywhere respected, her coffers rich, her possessions large ; and she cannot retain her ample glory, or maintain her brilliant position among the nations, if her statesmen are weak, pusillanimous, vacant in mind, rash in judgment, and wanting in reverence.

It is the duty of all statesmen to follow truth and justice. Deficient knowledge has ruined many, but flattery more. It is a soft voice which is musical to most ears, but its treachery is terrible. As a fair but wicked charmer it allures to destroy. Statesmen are everywhere encompassed by its insidious presence and influence. It is the one breath which carries them away on the wings of fancy, hides the truth, and compels them to commit error. Foolish flatterers are the statesman's worst enemies, and he the people's, if he deliberately listens and actually accepts their flimsy praise instead of rebuking, as a monarch and a king among men.

We cannot reasonably expect all our statesmen to be great in the accepted term. I do not for one moment entertain such an extensive idea of statecraftism. But we do, as a mighty nation, expect, nay demand our statesmen to be true, pure, and noble men—men who are essentially and eminently

prepared and qualified to govern ; men whose conduct, public and private, is unimpeachable ; men with superior intellects, and, if possible, superior learning ; men possessing minds of noble calibre, and who will be able in some small manner to foreshadow the political future, and to comprehend and legislate for the present by a wise and accurate knowledge of the past.

Without proper knowledge no really great or useful measure can be carried, or ought to be carried. Ignorance served England after a fashion in the past periods, but that time has long since gone by. We can no longer afford to play with the eternities. From failure we learn to thread the path to success ; from the past we measure the standard of the present, and in this exercise discover the hidden bridge of truth leading from the old world of shams to the new universe of realities. These realities, political and social, are intense in their importance, and the basis of all modern life. They must receive ceaseless and even constitutional attention, or the entire fabric of our national system of government will fall to pieces and remain a hideous heap of ruins. The people form the constitution ; neglect the people, and the constitution is wrecked. It is a stern truth but a just one.

All who are called statesmen, parliamentary men,

or 'honourable gentlemen,' must consider, for their own future prosperity, outside that of the nations, if idleness is superior to action, weakness to strength, pusillanimity to determination, cringing to nobility, ignorance to knowledge, hypocrisy to truth. They must consider, decide, become noble, and cease to wear the semblance of the statesman's responsible character. For the old order of things changes daily. If trustworthy statesmen fail, or dishonourable creatures are at the helm, the people will be found equal to the task of ensuring peace, and protecting the glorious liberties of England.

CONFIDENCE

K

CONFIDENCE fears not time, nor power, nor man ;
It holds a dispensation to be bold ;
And finds full precedence in hearts of old
Which fronted danger, and laid under ban
The follies of the age ; and led the van
As heroes in the charge of truth ; nor sold
Their souls for life, for place, for land, or gold ;
But held their honour pure though red blood ran.

The Right is ever confident, encased
In faultless armour ; and the true man shames
A thousand with his courage, which is traced
In all the actions of his life, and flames
His eager soul to worthy deeds, which waste
And crush all weakness, as Olympic games.

CONFIDENCE.

Insist on yourself ; never imitate.—EMERSON.

I know what I can do and what I cannot.—LANDOR.

Assured of worthiness, we do not dread competitors.—MEREDITH.

THE confident man is generally the successful man. Observe, I do not lay this conclusion down as an infallible axiom, or with the rigidity of a natural law. Every phase, custom, passion or sentiment of humanity is liable to be broken, controverted, or set aside by surprising or unforeseen circumstances. Clearer knowledge, and more correct ideas of life, may overthrow many ancient or unsettled laws in a moment, even if the observance of them is retained ; for men cling to old forms with the tenaciousness of a fanatic for a primitive but useless creed. Many men would prefer foregoing the benefits of a new law, rather than relinquish an antique and familiar custom. If Englishmen are liberal in nature and principles, they are more than con-

servative in their observance and retention of customs. Their brains have been moulded into permanant shape, so far as concerns their adherence to them. They have taken their stand, by a rock of centuries, with a bold and unalterable determination, being transformed into so many brave Fitz-James's, who, if attacked on this ground, will fight manfully and daringly, rather than relax their hand on the hilt of a single custom. This conduct is often foolish, but very like a stubborn Englishman's manner of proceeding. In this instance only, he is as obstinate as his own donkey. One prefers beating to going, and the other a rotten custom to a vital law.

An old observance preserved in activity, when its usefulness, policy, or propriety has departed, cannot be otherwise than injurious and undignified to the constitution or the individual. It may render the former a laughing-stock to the nations, and the latter a performing ape to his friends. No one desires to see the tyranny of an obsolete monarchy revived, or even that petty, but none the less real tyranny—mediæval feudalism—come into practice again. No one craves for old and defunct laws to be resuscitated—laws which burnt an old hag for a witch, hung a man for sheep-stealing, pilloried and cropped a

man's ears for writing strong or unpolitic books. Even the wisest and sternest would laugh heartily and loudly, if Mr Gladstone went down to the House of Commons one day to deliver an oration in a Roman Senator's costume, after the style of Chantrey's celebrated statue of George Canning. And Tragedy would be transmigrated into broadest Comedy, did Mr Irving essay to play Othello on the Lyceum stage, dressed in a Guard's uniform like Quin, Barry, and Garrick when they played that character.

We are educated by the past, and taught by experience. Yet how many parliamentary laws remain on the statute which ought to be repealed. How many fruitless customs are retained in every phase of life, and how much injustice to the people is permitted, because there is neither confidence in individuals, nor in the future. There are customs observed in State, Church, and Society which are utterly worthless, and serve no useful purpose whatever. Turn anywhere, there is infinite tomfoolery, deplorable mummery, and a general semblance of things, which ought long since to have been abolished. No law or custom should remain in observance when its utility is forever removed. Henceforth it should be rejected, discarded, renounced, and deposited carefully in the 'limbo' of forgotten laws.

It must not be hurled violently, or treated in any way roughly, for all laws and customs die slowly, and require much patience, persuasion, and forbearance before the ghost of them will depart.

It is significant of English statesmanship, that the people never obtain any real, sound, genuine beneficial law without continual hankering, processions two miles long, the making of violent speeches, the signing of petitions, and in the extremity, mobbing, burning of houses, and wholesale wrecking. Many statesmen appear to suffer from a special and peculiar infirmity of blindness. They will not see or even attempt to understand the people's desire and necessity for good and wholesome laws. They are blind, either because they are selfish aristocrats, autocrats, or land-owners, and fancy they will lose something by acting justly; or because they have no confidence in the great people of the three kingdoms, who return them to their parliamentary honours. Doubtless, there is a mixture of both. They are self-seeking and timorous, and for years many of them were afraid of the terrible French Revolution being repeated in England. Yet who but a weak and bigoted politician fears a revolution, even on the smallest scale in England, by giving just and wholesome laws to a people who both

deserve and require them. The statesman without confidence in his country or his measures, the statesmen who cannot pledge, or is afraid to benefit the great body of the people, who indeed are the state and constitution of England, is no statesman, nor does he deserve the name of one, or his position. He usurps the lofty place of another who is both wiser and more honest. By retaining it, he is a father of lies, and a speaker of cant.

They were both wise and bold men who wrested *Magna Charta* from King John, who insisted upon Charles I. signing *The Petition of Right*; who passed the Reform Bill, and the men who in our day endeavour to wring a just and good measure from an unrelenting parliament for the people's welfare, are men of the same pure and courageous metal. There must be the same pertinacity and perseverance; the same glorious fighting and endurance, the same grand, but prolonged struggle, prior to placing another just and generous law of liberty upon the statute book of England.

The statesmen who endeavours to pass a great and useful bill into law, cannot in reason or by experience expect to accomplish his task in a day. Nor does he. No worthy measure is any the worse for waiting any rational time, but rather

better. The bill which is passed into law with the rapidity of a steam-engine, or worked off like a newspaper in a night, can be no good whatever for any substantial or important purpose. It may be very material and lasting to a few, but never to the many. Passing a great measure is like fighting a great battle. There must be the same amount of wisdom, foresight, energy, tact and endurance displayed ; the same grasping of circumstances, the same sturdy fighting, and, at the proper season, the same glorious charge which carries death to the old useless forms, and victory to the new.

We hear much of 'want of confidence,' 'votes of censure,' and other similar courteous or discourteous parliamentary phrases. But, often this apparent wisdom and seeming earnestness is nothing more than the infinite parliamentary babble of weak, selfish, decayed, impatient or lamed politicians, who are prodigiously satisfied or prodigiously dissatisfied, according to the place they occupy. There is more senseless and useless talk indulged in by parliamentary men than by any other body, unless it is by the body ecclesiastical. They will not even make an effort to swallow their own wretched inanities and stupid follies in speech-making, but are so contented with their conduct that they, at every

unsuitable opportunity, manufacture and promulgate other vanities and absurdities, but at each succeeding time on a larger scale. Who can say when parliaments and parliamentary men will learn sufficient wisdom and common-sense to cease their hysterical cackling, which unmanly melody is even heard on the following day in the morning papers? When will they abandon their farsical antics, and act like men who sincerely desire the people's good? I presume never, or at least, not until another bold Oliver Cromwell or his shade bids them begone, not forgetting to take their eloquence of shams with them. Succeeding parliaments will learn that despicable mode of speaking, speedily enough without teaching, and none must remain to corrupt them, or repeated Oliver Cromwells will be required in every parliament to speak boldly, and dissolve courageously.

Parliaments generally appear paralysed to the real national necessities. They seem to exist solely to quarrel, to vote supplies—the chief life, end, and activity of all parliaments; to ask questions which are vaguely and seldom satisfactorily answered; to pass votes of censure, which peculiar mode of procedure must always be regularly and rigidly adhered to in any parliament, good or bad, wise or foolish. But as to passing any considerable measure which would transcribe an additional noble

law on the Charter of the Liberties of England, which would reflect credit on the age, and shed lustre on the annals both of history and parliament, and which furthermore would confer a lasting benefit on the people—this is never achieved but once in fifty years. True, something great, magnanimous, and noble is usually attempted every ten years, but the attempt almost as often proves abortive, unless the people urgently require it, and show a practical determination of gaining their desire.

It is ever the argument and defence of an oppositionist that any parliamentary bill is premature. It may be nothing more than his genuine love of procrastination, the petty jealousy of a politician, because his own lofty mind did not fathom that mode of relieving and blessing his countrymen, or, perhaps, the common parliamentary tactic of always opposing anything emanating from the 'other side.' But when the people are in earnest, an entire flood of obstructive and destructive eloquence could not stave off the bill they have been taught to expect. That statesman is wise who is not deaf to their voice, and strives, if right, just, and necessary, to meet their wishes. He is not merely popular, which would be little gain to a great man, but he is a seer and saviour of his country.

Politicians usually revel in the gift of duplicity.

It is the one talent in themselves they admire so largely and treasure so carefully. These men have a habit or a defect of not stating their opinions honestly, straightforwardly, fully. Many lack confidence to utter them, and many more have no confidence in their utility when uttered. That is the secret and the cause of so much parliamentary lameness. Where there is little or no confidence, there can be but little or no worth.

The man who has the pantomimic infirmity of starting at moonshine, is not the man to give birth to a great and worthy measure, or to stand easily in the sunshine of success. He falters on the very threshold of worthiness, and has not the smallest infinitesimal scrap of confidence to step into the arena of parliamentary conflict as a hero with sword drawn and scabbard thrown away. He has not even a shade of impudence,—which often answers for much worth,—to pretend the fearless attitude of ‘who’s afraid?’ Being a coward, he always creeps in where his safety is ensured, and never walks on God’s earth like an honest man. If he ever gives a thrust, it is with the dagger’s point, and where he is certain it will never be returned. A man with a lofty mind and high principles never reciprocates the hatred of a puny opponent, he merely scorns and pushes him aside with his foot. The puny creature has sufficient

sense to understand his littleness on these occasions, and is not slow to profit by their teaching. Still he never ceases to dance with the agility of a teetotum round the figure of eminence, popping in with the crush of the crowd to give a scratch when an honourable man would have delivered a blow. But it is the nature and the destiny of the weak and worthless to be cowardly and insignificant, therefore none can be astonished at their mean actions. They possess the attributes of the spy and the sneak, and cannot be noble or attain the smallest standard of honesty, dignity, goodness, distinction, or worth. They crawl forever outside the pale of nature's peers, and, forsooth, must remain there, lost and buried in the little cloud of dust they raise with so much noise and clamour. It is their fate to build their own oblivious tomb, while the hero sweeps by with his mind of strength and mantle of glory. He thinks, as he passes, what fools these pigmies are, but disdains to utter the thought when the folly is so flagrantly manifest.

Confidence ensures success. There may be much delay, continual impediments, and many enemies to fight, conquer, and subdue; but the herald does not blow his clarion blast in vain, and confidence will not waste its strength, patience, and perseverance in abortions. Where its heroic form

appears, success will be seen approaching, and all the powers of darkness, all the machinations of evil-minded men, and a myriad host of howling oppositionists could not stay its final progress; always providing that the confidence is of the right metal, and flourished in an honest and noble cause.

The loud, the weak, the insignificant, the driveller, and the coward, are often inflated to explosive rotundity with bombast, self-conceit, and confidence—of a kind. They strut about, like second Alexanders, with majestic mien, and shout with awful voice,—‘Give us other worlds to conquer, for we are idle, and dying of inactivity!’ Little dreamers, did they never stay to reflect that they were nothing more than mock-important bantam cocks; not even ascending to the dignity of those greater cocks—the farmyard kings, and liege-lords of many subjects?

Honest confidence fears and refuses no adversary, does he come in knightly honours. It welcomes, nay, almost embraces, the upright foe worthy of his steel, which in our day is a steel pen, or a mortal tongue. Both antagonists are conscientious, and the duel or battle is sincere. When Edward Bulwer was at school at Acton, Doctor Parr gave him some Parr-like, but unorthodox advice, ‘Be ambitious.’ The man who

is not so, and who has no earnest feeling to surpass someone, or something, will do but little in the battle of life. It is a vice which leans to virtue's side; and *is* a virtue when used reasonably, properly, and temperately. But, as a generality, ambitious men are never temperate. And I half believe they are better so, since what a man achieves by force of earnestness, he does well.

Ambition is superior to bigotry, and can sail without its assistance. A proper spirit of its warmth is not to be despised by earnest men, who would carve a great name on the bead-roll of history, or accomplish something magnificent for his country's good; it should rather be cherished as an equitable help in this age of competition. A just ambition gives fiery zeal to honest confidence, which otherwise is often cold and inanimate, and will ever suffer asphyxiation when there is nothing to give it impetus. Many, without the service of ambition, would suffer poverty and want. No man had greater confidence in his intellectual powers than Samuel Johnson, yet no man would have been more indolent in their usage, if his empty pocket and starving stomach had not often called him to literary exertion. Ambition could not perform that office. It was left to circumstance. And

Samuel Johnson in this was a very ordinary mortal indeed. Every one should be ambitious to excel. It is when used for this purpose that it becomes a virtue. But when a man stoops and panders to it as a vulgar passion, it degenerates into an execrable vice, and may lead him none know whither.

An ambitious confidence in intellect or motives is not to be condemned or abused. Many statesmen, poets, and authors, who are now illustrious and truly great in the world's history, would have been reduced to nonentities but for its animating influence. The inordinate thirst for personal distinction exhibited by the bold and impudent conduct of many public men is a disease, but one which carries its own bitterness, and frequently propounds and effects its own cure. Ambition often serves to awaken genius when dormant. Its services are sometimes painfully and urgently necessary to illustrate the fine qualities of many noble minds, to make the lustre of their genius shine, and to bring into prominent relief their divers and many excellent faculties. Genius is in its nature great, but it is publicity alone which can render it famous. It is in this where a worthy ambition is the assisting angel.

Confident genius can scale to sublime heights in literature, and fear nothing earthly or unearthly.

It can create a Homer, a Dante, and a Goethe, a Shakespeare, a Milton, a Robert Burns, and a Thomas Carlyle. It can sit comfortably in loftier seats than regal thrones and feel no sense of uneasiness, or even unfitness, which composure would tax the royal or unroyal powers of most kings to the utmost, unless they were Oliver Cromwells. It is nature, and not hereditary right, which qualifies a man to sit in high places and govern his fellow-men. It is genius, and not a long pedigree, which makes a man eminent, worthy, great, illustrious, and even transcendental. It is confidence and not assumption which renders a man famous or infamous, for it can achieve both with the same easy display of energy. Shakespeare will always be greater than his patron. Still, I do not mean this in Southampton's disparagement, but would reverence his memory. And all the world has settled the point long since, that one Samuel Johnson, living in Bolt Court, will ever be nobler than a certain nobleman of his acquaintance residing in Chesterfield House. And Burns, turning up a 'wee, sleekit, cow'rin', tim'rous beastie' with his plough, or inditing *Bruce's Address to his Army at Bannockburn*, *Auld Lang Syne*, or *The Cottar's Saturday Night*, will be remembered with grateful affection and reverent honour long after the majority of the Scottish nobility are forgotten.

Brilliant genius must ever be preferred to rank and wealth. And its sublime confidence and fearless attitude be applauded beyond the grasp of the sentimental folly and vulgar corruption so often attendant upon accident of birth and fortune. It is genius I worship, and not the man who possesses its glorious cap of wisdom: Him I honour, reverence, love; for he bodies forth the eternal secrets and beauties of the Universe in his teaching, and feeds mankind with the golden fruit of his stupendous mind. He is one of Nature's sons, and scarcely anything is too great, or too noble for his acceptance and reward.

FOLLY OF THE WISE

FOLLY OF THE WISE

WISDOM all men covet ; yet who obtain
 Its clear-cut beauty in its finest hue !
 For this, knowledge thro' study must accrue ;
Long nights and weary days be spent in vain ;
Grey years of toiling effort, and of pain,
 Devoted as a hero—bold and true—
 Despising station, wealth, and fame. The few
With conquered vision are the gods who reign.

Still once secured it does not free from vice,
 Nor hold the life immaculate from wrong.
It points, but does not lead ; nor doth entice
 The heedless world with witchery of song.
The wise who stoop to folly, scorn advice,
 And dance to demon music with the throng.

FOLLY OF THE WISE.

There are few men but do more silly things than they say.

CONGREVE.

A wise man is not always a good man.—STEELE.

Great men too often have greater faults than little men can find room for.—LANDOR.

How often in reading history and biographies of great, eminent, and wise men we have cause to regret that folly, if not vice, is frequently found allied to their wisdom, greatness, and fame. It might pass without remark, were this derogating phase less common, or only made its appearance in more insignificant men. And even now, with the historical or literary giants of renown, we are in danger of holding their follies and vices as virtues; and so accustomed are we to their disreputable and unwholesome presence, that little, or nothing, in biographical writings, is urged against any prominent, popular, or illustrious man of past periods. Its very frequency creates a con-

formity. Greatness dazzles the human mind. Wisdom awes and humbles it. But both together suspend, if not cloud it, and the weakness, meanness, folly or vices, obscured on one side by brilliant talents and the splendour of genius ; and on the other by the vanity of worship and the plaudits of the million. The crowd is deceived by greatness ; and the great by flattery. One is as weak as the other. And both are utterly incapable of forming a safe, sound or critical judgment when animated or enraptured according to circumstance or disposition.

Justice is usually represented as blind, signifying her fairness and impartiality. That representation would also serve for the world ; for certainly it is blind, irretrievably blind, self-blind, blind beyond hope of recovery ; but the blindness is not the honourable bandage of justice, but the dishonourable bandage of injustice. The world is almost always in a partial mood, and has an excessively stupid and very erroneous trick of being unfair. The multitude, in many instances, can never penetrate beneath the surface of things. It has been carefully educated not to do so. The 'Father of the People,' somewhat overdrawn by Dickens, in the form of a fat alderman, or a county member, takes upon himself the responsible office of thinking for his supporters

or non-supporters. 'My dear children, you have no time, and had you the time, not the education and training, to think laboriously, honestly, successfully, and beneficially for your most important interests: on with your pots and pans, and I your best friend, will think for you.' That is the substance of his teaching, and always the tendency.

Many are under the mistaken impression that the 'Father of the People' member is now a nonentity. He is not so, for never was so unwelcome an individual so alive. He is not so easily detected, because veiled so completely in a fair skin and warm attitude. If he does not use the language of his fatherhood, he is not slow to put it into practice. There are many men who sit in St Stephen's who ardently despise the intellects and the persons of those plain blunt men who returned them at the head of the poll, and, in a sense, practically made them a present of a parliamentary seat by their valuable votes. Some of these members *do* think for their constituents, and allow none to usurp their place of pride and privilege, but they are few. Whoever they may be, they are at liberty to think, legislate, and to pass bills for a thousand, a million, or a hundred millions, but do they perform these momentous functions of their parliamentary

office, honestly, fairly and justly? Perhaps, they may be excused a little of their cold contempt and lofty disdain for their inferiors in purse and knowledge, if they countervail their pitiable conduct by yielding their constituents solid advantages.

John Dix observed and chronicled, that when young Benjamin Disraeli was seeking election from the honest burgesses of Taunton, that he 'despised the clodhopper in his heart, so contemptuous at times was his expression.' No man could be more superb in his derision and disdain than Benjamin Disraeli, especially when attired in a dark bottle-green frock-coat, with waistcoat of 'extravagant' pattern, and elaborate watch-chain, unless we except William Pitt, who could mount to the sublime in his contempt and scorn for any man when it suited his purpose. Yet who will be so bold or foolish as to accuse these statesmen of doing nothing advantageous for England and her people? The excellent qualities of Disraeli almost compel one to overlook, if not forget, his showy attire, the fine poise of his head, the sneering nostrils, and the elegant but dignified wave of the hand. In the popular mind, his virtues outweigh his follies and vices. Yet in reality no virtue can balance or blot out the smallest folly, or the most infinitesimal vice.

It may cause it to be forgotten, but it can never eradicate it from the life's actions. It may be excluded, and the character amended, but it is forever there, unannihilated and unconsumed, and goes toward forming our estimation of the man. And when his nature and character are analysed and examined, it cannot either in justice or propriety be entirely disregarded and overlooked. The whole fabric would collapse without it. It would be a hollow sham, and a gilded lie. The biography that only exhibits the angel is not true, but false. If there is any of the demon in a man—and there is in most men—to the dead man's honour, it ought to be shown side by side with the angel.

Boswell was censured for revealing to the world some undesirable phases in Johnson's life and character. And Mr Froude, in our time, has been almost brutally attacked for the same offence—so-called. In both instances there is some evidence to be urged *pro et con*; but whatever may be said in condemnation, I may impassionately assert in their favour that neither Johnson nor Carlyle have suffered from their biographer's hands. We love and reverence them none the less notwithstanding certain revelations, and our love and reverence of a man is a good test of biographical treatment. If we had been fed on all 'angel,' the

books very unangelically might have been tossed into our study fires, for what service they would have rendered, not merely to the great reading public, but more especially to the student of character, and the lover of literary men. They would have been neither honest nor true, but smooth and misleading. The heroes would have been illuminated by a false light and, to those who knew better, a ridiculous one.

I do not love the system of raking up a dead man's little offences and worst vices, with a deliberate intention to blacken his character in the eyes of his contemporaries, and also of posterity. It is not writing biography, but pandering to the curiosity, often filthy curiosity, of the mean, the insignificant, and the little. It is a vile system, and cannot be too loudly condemned. A man with a mind, disposition, and character of a Curll, might find exquisite delight in the task; an affectionate biographer, who conscientiously arranges 'angel' and 'demon' side by side, never. He deplores those detracting traits or vices, which he reveals more acutely, sensibly, and honestly than the weak and foul-minded critic who so bombastically and cruelly abuses him.

It is much wiser for a biographer, with a deep-seated affection for his banished father or brother, in the gentle craft of letters, to paint the clouded

side ; since, if he does not do so, another without his affection certainly would. For no man's vices are known to himself alone. The true, but tender-hearted biographer can feel, while the cold, censoring critic can only sting. Most men have brains enough to distinguish the juster and more conscientious man. The mountebank is a fool, the critical son of this loud-tongued species is also a fool, but with an immense degree of despicableness superadded, since his foolishness is steeped in venom, and brandished with brutality. An honest critic is a blessing, the foul one a curse. He is never at his ease unless he wounds, or endeavours to wound ; and never so happy as when he has penned or circulated an injustice. His bread is purchased at the expense of another man's reputation, and his life sustained by literary vice.

That so many wise men have proved themselves fools, is no apology for folly. It is more a matter of regret than of laughter. Wisdom stooping to folly and vice is a tragedy sufficiently painful to make the gods weep. It serves no good or useful purpose whatever. If the beauty of wisdom is contaminated with evil, all is marred, even as bad symmetry mars an otherwise fine picture. When vice is allied to the same clear-cut beauty, it loses half its ugliness, and is rendered a snare to the

innocent, whose great and only excuse is, that some of the finest votaries of wisdom countenance vice by practising it. To these willing and unwise mortals who are morally slipping, from example of the greater—to these, their bed of lies is sweet, their false dreams delicious, until the awakening; when they learn, perhaps rudely, unkindly, and always with astonishment and horror, that wise men deplore and despise the folly or vice they commit, and on every suitable, and often, ludicrously-unsuitable occasion, condemn it with all the weight of their philosophy, force of genius, wealth of learning, and vigour of eloquence. That they embroil their hands with folly and vice, is not because they love these disparaging phases, but because they are *men*. That is the only reason, the only secret. Being men, they are subject to the same human passions, feelings, temptations, frailties, as ordinary mortals; but their natures are of more exquisite fineness, and their sensibilities more keen. The higher a man is in intellect or genius, the more easily is he fretted and tortured, even by small vices and little things. He feels more sensibly than any man the pains and the pleasures of life. Does death knock at his door, he perhaps exhibits but little outward grief and affliction, but inwardly, where mortal eyes see not, his highly-strung soul is twisted and tormented by ten

thousand agonies. His anguish is immense, but too acute for vulgar display. His sorrow belongs to himself, his family, and his God. But, on the other hand, does happiness visit his household, and fortune smile on his children, his delight is finer, deeper, and more lasting than another's. A man of genius is greater than his fellows, but his eminently sensible nature continually pays the penalty of his superiority and lofty position.

No man taught higher, purer, or wiser morality than Bacon, yet no man possessing half his philosophy, genius, learning, and sense of what honour should be, was ever, under equivalent circumstances, so abject, treacherous, dishonourable, mean. His mind entitles him to equality with Plato and Shakespeare, but some of his actions, especially one, degenerate him to the level of the common cut-throat. Still, no one can honestly suppose that Bacon loved villainy for its own sake. He utilised it, as a ready and favourable tool for his advancement, and not from a peculiar mania. He was ambitious to rise, and to measure progress as a public man. To push his way at court, to occupy a high position in the constitution, to clutch the keys of office, to become a dignified personage in the state; these advantages were more to him, for the time being, than his integrity, honour, or even the head of his noble friend Essex. Any

other nobleman or person of distinction would have served his purpose as excellently and as well. If Essex accelerated his rise, it was because he was a tool ready to his hand. Bacon fell ignominiously to advance his interests, and has gained a name which, for infamy and treachery attached to it, is scarcely equalled in history.

Bacon was ever searching after knowledge, and through knowledge wisdom. It was Bacon who said, in a letter to his uncle, Lord Burghley, '*I have taken all knowledge to be my province ;*' yet it was Bacon who fell so low. It was Bacon who, perhaps, of all men, could have written the *Plays of Shakespeare*, yet it was Bacon who was the meanest and least honourable man of his time ; for he who does not respect the sacred bond of friendship is worthy of no good name, and is a target for every indignity. As Pope puts it, he was the 'wisest and meanest of mankind.' A paradoxical position, and a unique one. For his wisdom the greatest might contend in vain ; for his baseness none would care to excel, or even equal ; at least, none who prefer honour before place, gratitude before infamy, friendship before treachery, virtue before vice. That Bacon, in his ambition for preferment, employed this unlovely method to gain it, not loving it, does not render him less censurable, but even more so, since he employed

it against his superior understanding and better knowledge. It swells his perfidy, and enlarges the condemnation. He concealed light, so far as concerned himself, for no man possessed more, and preferred darkness for his guiding sign. His intellect was great, but his heart was narrow, and his nature mean—hence the Bacon that we know.

In all humanity there is no creature so foolish, lamentable, and wretched as a wise man, who acts and lives unwisely. He is a contradiction in terms. He asphyxiates his own teaching, so far as he himself is affected. He deliberately falls into the very errors he condemns, and miserably wears the character he despises. He cannot, or will not, by right of manhood, select to embrace those virtues he paints with so many rosy-coloured beauties, and so eloquently defends. His heart is stronger than his mind, his passions more masterly than his will, and his spiritual nature servile to the sensual. It is there where he founders; a whole world of philosophy cannot save a lame heart.

Anyone fond of drawing and urging comparisons in times, persons, or natures, would have ample scope in analysing and comparing characters so widely dissimilar as those belonging individually to Socrates and Bacon. Both were eminently

wise ; yet one only morally so. One is noted for his manly dignity and courage ; the other is notorious for his grovelling servility and self-interest ; one drank hemlock with fearless fortitude, while the other sacrificed a friend, with all the eloquence and learning at his command. Our Shakespeare has said, '*Comparisons are odorous.*' But this comparison proves the common mistake '*Odious.*'

Bacon, as a man of letters I love, and even, if I could forget the man without the letters, it would serve no useful purpose. We must accept the philosopher, statesman, and lawyer, as he created his own character ; and there is almost as much philosophy to be deduced from his life as there is from his works. That one is abject and the other magnificent. We cannot rectify, but we can observe, we can learn, be instructed, be thoughtful, deduct the true from the false, and practically assert that pride, dignity, morality, virtue, due to human nature, which Bacon so weakly and persistently avoided.

Bacon's life points decidedly to one inference—that with much wisdom, there can be much folly and vice. His conduct on many occasions was entirely the reverse of a wise and good man. Certainly he was craftily wise, but not honourably so. Wisdom teaches virtue, but the passions of human nature, however wise the man

will break down the strongest barrier of morality, if that man is vacillating and weak.

I selected Bacon for these few desultory remarks, not because he is the only man whose folly equalled his wisdom, but because no man, at once so wise and so treacherous, is better known. The pages of history are swollen to a mighty torrent with great and wise men who have committed themselves to extensive follies, and have bathed their hands in many vices. From Alexander the Great to Nelson is a great breach, but not too great for the foolish wise who fill it. It is a greater breach from the fall of Satan to the rise and popularity of the last great man, but the intervening space does not suffer for want of occupants.

But of all the wise and vicious characters none can ever pretend to match that personification of evil whom we call *Devil*. No one will dispute his pre-eminence, and I have a certain apprehension that none covet his exalted and unique position. Milton gave him a conscience; but less epical individuals strive every way possible to afford him a wide space, not craving for his contaminating society. A wrestling match with the devil never pays, however skilful the athlete. With his superior craft, subtlety, cunning, deceit, he cannot be otherwise than victor.

M

If a man does not believe in the personality of the devil he must give credence to the presence of evil, which is everywhere too clearly, and too fully manifest. And none can gainsay the wisdom of evil, if no devil. A human heart or mind meditating and planning an atrocious deed may be as wise as it is vicious. A man holds the devil is not there, prompting and lending his assistance. I do not insist upon his personal presence. He may not be there. But there is something equivalent—something which is so foully cunning as to dispense with his services. In whatever form, or no form, the devil is concerned, or exists in the human being, he or his *alter ego*, is wiser than our conception, and more abandoned and corrupt than the vilest man who ever stooped to crime.

Statesmen, philosophers, poets, many wise, and almost as many foolish. The devil has led them by the nose, or by his sulphurous smoke, and like meek lambs they followed. They sacrificed their wisdom and better qualities on the altar of vice and folly; he, acting as high-priest, and by the functions of his office, promised infinite blessings, which in reality were all veiled curses. They were received like spoonfuls of honey with open-mouthed joy, and profuse thanks. Some call their conduct confidence; I call it a willing

embracing of evil. They are like coy maidens, ready and anxious to be wooed, and who pout in a reproachful but pretty manner when the wooing is not very speedy.

This maidenly metaphor has plunged me into a maze of wonderment. How does a philosopher or a wise man conduct himself in love? Certainly he has plenty of scope to mingle folly with wisdom, and to act foolishly, if he has a mind to. Does he propose through the post, or the telegraph office, in two short words? Does he write an essay describing his divers sensations in an elaborate and learned manner, and so puzzle the little maiden's brain, and make her head ache into the bargain, with words of thundering length and meaning? Does he enter her boudoir, like a tragedian, and plead with pathetic modulation? Does he stand before her speechless with his mouth open, as though he wanted to be fed with spoon-meat? or does he throw himself on his knees before her, after the fashion of the novelists, and pour out the ardour of his passion in a tide of broken eloquence and falling tears? Or does he conduct himself like an ordinary lover, who, by the way, is never a fool! I have a peculiar fancy that a philosopher wooing forgets his wisdom, and only remembers the little bit of a woman who, he imagines, is the best of her sex, the acme of perfection, and was born ex-

pressly to become his wife, and, like a common mortal, takes measures to effect this happy consummation accordingly. Anyway a little folly is readily overlooked and forgiven in a lover, because expected. The Sage of Bolt Court had his 'dear Tetty' to fondle; and the Sage of Chelsea his 'dear Janekin' who delighted to put her arms round his neck and 'hush him into the softest sleep possible.' After all, the world is ruled more by love than by wisdom. If folly creeps in, as it will creep in, and frequently not only creep but rush, it is not by defect or dislike of either. We shall never have a perfect world till human nature is composed of some other material, and fitted with perfect passions. Even our great Shakespeare was not without his follies, nor Bacon free from vice. Still neither vice nor folly can be excused. Self-control is more honourable to men than wisdom propped up by either of these failings. But when wisdom is supported and maintained by self-control it is excellent.

The follies and vices of wise men are many; if difficult to extricate they are not insurmountable. Every man is his own free agent. Or, as Tennyson has it, 'Man is man and master of his fate.' He can embrace, or reject, at his own will. He creates his own destiny, as he creates his own character. Wisdom teaches, but does not coerce or

compel. If a man sullies it by folly or vice he cannot urge, or flatter his frailty to censure it, but must, in justice, condemn his own weak and corrupt nature. Wisdom is always blameless, because pure.

HYPOCRITES

I LOATHE the puny creature of the hour,
Whose only virtue is his ready smile ;
Who barter's soul for place, and hides his guile
Beneath a seeming condescension. Power,
Not people's good, he craves. He would deflower
A world of beauty, and e'en laugh the while,
To gain the purpose of his heart grown vile ;
Would stoop to vice for greed, and never cower.

Abject, despicable, devoid of grace,
His mind is on the level of the brute.
Intelligent in cunning, all can trace
His murdered conscience in the ample fruit
Of villainy and brutal deeds, which lace
His flying years, corrupted at the root.

HYPOCRITES.

I do beguile

The thing I am, by seeming otherwise.—SHAKESPEARE.

And some that smile have in their hearts, I fear,
Millions of mischiefs.—SHAKESPEARE.

At one time he seems fox almost entirely, at another, almost
entirely ass.—LANDOR.

WITHOUT doubt, outside the pale of criminality, the hypocrite is at once the least honourable and most despicable creature among men. None love him, and all avoid his society as they would a monster. He is not an enigma, but a sham; one who endeavours to appear enigmatical and fails utterly. He is not a man, but a fragment, with all the nobility of manhood crushed out. As a mortal he is of no more utility than a dry sponge. His better self is asphyxiated, and nothing sounder than a delusive semblance remains. In reality he resembles nothing so well as the skeletons we see strung together on wire in a Natural History Museum. That is the hypocrite's true definition,

and an exact measurement of his nature and character—he is a skeleton-man held together by mystical and invisible wire. Those of my readers who love and have an admiration for skeleton-men, down on your knees and worship the next time one crosses your path, whether in the street or drawing-room; for you will be amply rewarded with the genuine skeleton grin, an atlantic of smiles, and a brilliant cataract of soft musical words, falling to the exquisite hypocritical melody, ‘By my soul I love, you.’ But beware of provoking his anger, for an enraged hypocrite is an enraged devil. If you value your peace have a care about thwarting his dearest wishes, or anticipating him in any way; exasperate him not, or his former exquisite melody may change instantaneously into the music of the screech owl, emphasised by livid passion, clenched hands, bolting eyes, and grinding teeth; accompanied to the very excellent words so kindly supplied by Oliver Goldsmith:

I'll give thee something yet unpaid,
 Not less sincere than civil :
 I'll give thee—ah !
 I'll give thee—to the devil.

Hypocrites abound in all ranks and classes of society. Their noisome and obnoxious presence pervades the entire universe of humanity. The cat-like tread, the serene countenance, and the

over-kind manner mark the hypocrite in a moment. As a king was once known by his noble carriage, so is the hypocrite by his serpent-like ways. And, indeed, he also is in some sense a king, for he has been anointed with oil, not with the sacred, or with Johnson's oil of vitriol, but with the oil of cunning, which is the most remarkable of all in its effects. It is the most insidious and devilish of all compounds, because it has the appearance of being genuine. It is cunning—ceaseless, ruthless cunning—which is the hypocrite's safest and mightiest weapon, and the most bloody and disastrous in issues. It is ghastly, because hidden; for the true hypocrite never makes a thrust in the open, but shields himself behind his white pillar of seeming goodness, and stabs in secrecy. He may accomplish his terrible work with the poisonous arrow shot with unerring aim from the distance, or plunge his dagger into the heart with one hand, while the other is fondly encircled about the neck, as with the affection of a lover. Time, place, and circumstance are only taken into consideration, so far as the best method to be employed; they are no object to the completion of any piece of knavery. The course which appears not the easiest, but the safest, is always the one adopted. For the hypocrite disregards trouble. It is in no way incompatible with his nature, and is, at all times,

rendered subservient to his profession of rascality. Indeed, if trouble were not despised, he would never prosper in his intentions. In this alone he shows a magnanimous spirit. But it is a species of magnanimity which has lost all its virtue by the disreputable manner in which it is enlisted in the service of evasive, but none the less deliberate vice.

Thrusting aside the generalities of hypocrites; and descending to particular specimens and phases, I assert, without the slightest hesitation, that the hypocritical ecclesiastic, priest, parson, or whatever title he is pleased to be distinguished by, is the most degraded and vile of all hypocrites. If any man exists devoid of an intelligent and human soul it is the hypocrite of this type. He has lost all sense of virtue, goodness, nobility, beauty, sweetness, manhood. He is blind to his divine image—whether of God or of nature still divine—and is utterly forgetful that the functions of his sacred office are infinite in their bearing and importance, or only remembers and utilises them, not for the good of humanity, but for the base and servile advancement and completion of his own uncompromising and treacherous measures. I do not wish to consign him to the lowest circle in Dante's *Hell*, because I love neither the place nor its master, and also that I have a large hope in the better qualities and reflecting powers of men,

that there are none, howsoever degraded in nature and character, who may not, with perseverance, shake off the trammels of vice, and become a free man, and no longer the devil's slave. If I do not wish anything cruel and unkind I maintain that the ecclesiastical hypocrite deserves a remarkably distressing position for a space, to remind him of his villainy, and to demonstrate to others its ample reward in punishment.

Duplicity in a priest—I employ the word priest in its widest sense—who pretends and actually professes, by his spiritual office, to be utilised as the creature, and even instrument of his Creator, to perform direct and imperative good, duplicity in such a man is nothing less than devilism, and devil worship. He is thrice, and more than thrice a traitor. We can forgive animosity, acrimony, and even stupidity, which is not always so humorous as it appears, and we can further venture to forgive that great personal evil and abuse—black calumny—but most men find it difficult and trying to overlook and forgive deliberate duplicity. Those who can make light of this vicious trait, and especially when urged against themselves, must have the organ of veneration very largely developed, but by nothing holier than that splendid bump-raiser, an unsympathising cricket ball, which does not respect intellect,

nor brains; nor talent, nor genius, nor a William Shakespeare, were he not shrewd enough to save his head with his hand.

In the churches of the early and middle ages, duplicity was organised into a system, and was employed more extensively, and with more purpose and success than it is now. We are almost free from its insidious presence; then it was the main support of the ecclesiastics. They could not have held the Church together without it. That, and superstition, kept it from falling about their ears. Happily any church of real good requires no false props in this nineteenth century of ours; and when I say we are free from its power, I only allude to church government, and not to individual members. Did I assert that there are none given to duplicity it would amount to a glaring falsehood and a deliberate perversion of known facts. It would be trampling on better knowledge and murdering truth. The Church is overrun, and society is riddled through and through with hypocritical priests, who, indeed, are only priests for selfish and servile purposes. The 'cloth' covers a multitude of sins. I do not speak universally, but of individuals; for we have many men of very noble qualities and lofty souls in the Church, who are as honourable and as high-principled as the

greatest and the purest in any department or profession. We have churchmen who are a credit and an honour to our nation. In intellectual vigour, worthiness of conduct, and purity of life, they give place to none. Men of this stamp I admire, and even reverence. They are the pillars of the Church and the saviours of society. There is no necessity to name any. Every man is acquainted, or has some slight knowledge of the public and private character of our truly honest churchmen, or, at least, with those in his own immediate vicinity.

The 'cloth' does not make the priest. Carlyle most humorously exploded that doctrine long since, when he put on that mystical character of Teufelsdröckh in *Sartor Resartus*. He found that bishops, and even archbishops, in the nude state, 'not a shirt on them,' were nothing but so many 'forked radishes' with as many heads 'fantastically carved.' They were still men, 'every mother's son of them.' Yet, at the present moment, despite Carlyle's odd but earnest book, there are many, nay, there are myriads, who still have a firm and unshaken belief in the clothes. Because a man is a parson, or a *clergyman* as the fair sex delight in calling him, he must be respectable, honourable, upright, virtuous, and 'fit' society for the tea-table, and particularly for the unmarried daughters, whom many honest clerks

are desperately in love with, and would do anything in reason, or out of reason, to occupy the *dear* clergyman's place for a few minutes, to breathe the ardour of their affection ; but then 'mamma' says they are only *clerks* and she knows nothing of their *family* ; therefore they are outcasts, and the clergyman is welcomed by 'mamma' with all possible warmth.

But even proper 'mammias' sometimes make mistakes, and particularly the very proper 'mamma.' That *dear man* the curate, who calls in the very nick of time for tea, and eats six muffins, and drinks as many cups of five o'clock beverage at her table, is usually a very innocent and, in some instances, an ambitious individual, but — not always. The criminal parson may not always be a curate ; he may be a rector, or a bishop. His coat is black, of whatever rank, but not blacker than his intentions, his cravat is white, but not whiter than his outward conduct. This garb and profession has often been utilised to perpetrate crime, because the safest and least detectable ; and especially has it been with many the highway to hypocrisy.

It is those soft, silken ecclesiastics, who walk about with an affable or dignified air, who are better beggars than donors, apter receivers than givers, finer preachers than doers, more excellent in a general all-round hypocrisy than in a just and

upright manner of life—it is these who are the proper subjects for unlimited scorn and contempt. It may be eminently respectable, and, perhaps, highly gratifying to the feelings, to wear a long coat and a broad-brimmed hat with twin tassels dangling over the side; it may be very pleasant to be addressed ‘reverend sir;’ it may be very agreeable to be invited to good dinners, if the digestive apparatus is in working order; it may be very soothing and comforting to the heart to draw *one thousand* a year, and even more so to generously engage a poor half-starved curate at *eighty pounds* per annum to perform the greater part of the entailed duties. All this may be very welcome and acceptable, the lady-helps would call it *nice*, but I fancy that horny-handed Hodge, keeping his family alive, respectable, happy, and well on twelve shillings a week is the brighter picture, and there is no doubt about the more honourable man. Hodge’s coat is not so good, but his heart is sounder, his intentions purer, his actions less selfish, and his life altogether praiseworthy. Any man, however poor, who maintains his integrity is superior in character to the ecclesiastical, or any other hypocrite, drawing out his wretched existence on the face of this wide earth, be he clothed in the richest velvet, silk or broad-cloth obtainable. Without an honourable life he

is nothing finer than a well-dressed scarecrow stuck up to the amusement and laughter of all true men. Certainly he is not a man, and, if decked superbly, the scarecrow attitude would become him best, and the office suit him admirably. No exertion is required ; he is not even expected to utter a word. His highest duty is merely to stand stock-still with his legs well straddled, and to say, in aspect, 'What a fine fellow I am. No crow will dare to peck at me, or near me.' Alas! he is in error, and suffers from a misconception. Crows sometimes alight on scarecrows, and men sometimes sit upon hypocrites, ecclesiastical or otherwise ; for no man is safe who is a wrong-doer, a deceiver, or an inanition.

I have no intention of forsaking the social hypocrite, at the expense of the ecclesiastical. The latter demanded prior attention on account of his position and influence in society. The former is subordinate to him in example, but none the less responsible as a man. Obscurity, in some instances, only serves to make the hypocrite more subtle in his cunning, more dangerous in his deceit, and more treacherous in his measures. It is not light, but darkness, that aids the hypocrite to shape his plans and to practise his designs.

The social hypocrite is essentially a sneak and

a coward. There is nothing noble in him. To accomplish his purpose he will stoop to any species of perfidy and villainy, short of anything smelling of the law ; although his unnatural methods may cause him to smart under the lash of the horse-whip. He is a social pest, and a universal nuisance. Still it may be erroneous to judge him too harshly, and to handle him too severely, since I fear, he is the missing link between Darwin's ape and Nature's man. For has he not the nature of the former, devoid the dignity of the latter ? Evidently the mystery is solved in him, and he may henceforward claim the vacant place without the slightest danger of usurping another.

Suspended between apehood and manhood the hypocrite takes to his filthy cunning as naturally as a newly-fledged duckling to the water. If we were disposed to accept his craft and offences kindly we might give praise instead of censure, pity in place of punishment, for remaining so true to the characteristic functions of his nature ; but unhappily, or happily, human nature, like mother nature, is never very free in forgiving injury, and especially of the hypocritical species. The friend who appears so attentive and kind, and at the same moment is so indulgent in probing into one's private arrangements, sifting one's affairs, as through a microscope, nor thinks time or distance

any objects to impede his manufacture of mischief—the friend of this benevolent type is no friend, but a traitor, no man, but a hypocrite—a hypocrite whose vice has been doubly distilled, and a creature who would have done credit to the pillory, with branded cheeks, slit nose, and cropped ears. Hypocrisy worked in the sacredness of friendship is of the worst and most despicable description, and is deserving of all condemnation.

I take no delight in hearing of any criminal being punished in a cruel and barbarous manner, or even harshly but it rouses my indignation when I see men go about unpunished, who pretend to saintly characters, and appear the very acme of good nature, but who, in reality, are dancing to the tune of the devil's fiddle, with all the earnestness of their being. Doubtless the devil laughs right heartily, and cheers full lustily to see them acting so cleverly, and submitting themselves so obediently, even slavishly to his will; but they meet with no warmer approbation than his, and, by all accounts, his is warm enough. In their own circle in life they receive nothing but scorn, contempt, anger, and renunciation. They are marked with leprosy, and are outcasts from friendship and the society of all good men.

No man had a greater, deeper, or juster hatred for men of this stamp than Carlyle. He fought

against them and their unprincipled actions with intellect and pen vigorously. Hypocrites, shams, and cant met with an intense disdain and rage at his hand, which for purity of purpose rose to a sublime height. It was his righteous and natural gospel which he began to preach in that wild desolate spot known to the world as Craigenputtock, a gospel which he forsook only with his life. No man ever had a more honest one. Those who dispense with Christianity must embrace his. The universe of men is in unison on this point—hypocrites and shams are intolerable. No parliament is required to meet in full strength, to indulge in infinite talk and endless amendments, prior to passing a bill supported with rolls of signatures three miles long, in favour of this opinion. It is universal and just, and no parliamentary eloquence or lame bills can pronounce it otherwise.

Dr Johnson loved a good hater, but no man loves a good hypocrite. We can avoid, parry or reciprocate the onslaught of the former, but we never know when or where we may expect a lunge from the latter. He is of a lower type, and hides like a snake in the grass, waiting to beguile another Eve, or maybe, another Adam. In cunning, invincible; in seeming kindness, obsequious; he may baffle and deceive the shrewdest,

and is absolutely certain with his super-added vivacity, and finished cleverness, to delude and rifle the innocent. In his false character he is petted, and his hypocrisy unknown; but let even the weakest cheat him of his desired object, snatch the cherished prize from his grasp, and by one bold stroke overthrow his well-ordered policy and arrangements, and in a moment the mask is thrown aside, the snake seen, his purpose discerned, his temper out, war declared, and the arch-demon himself could not be more disturbed, dishonest, and passionate in his conduct. Tread on a snake and it will raise its head and dart deadly poison. Tread on the neck of a polished hypocrite and he will raise a very hydra head of manifold evil and abuse.

The hypocrite is an elastic animal, and never loses hope. His stupidity is prodigious, and his emptiness absurd. For he will never believe, or confess he is dead, even when he is killed. His selfishness renders him blind to his own folly. While others are laughing at his fruitless and ridiculous industry, he is fascinated by a sweet sensation of infinite importance; and is as charmed with his irrational and idiotic conduct as Malvolio with his yellow stockings. Certainly he deserves the Order of Merit for his pains, but he should wear it reversed on the small of his back to

disclose to the world that he was running antagonistic to it, and also to distinguish him from the genuine meritorious wearers. His fellow-mortals would refrain from laughing too heartily or unkindly; for they would consider his imbecility, and above all his semi-man-apehood. He is transfixed between two eternities. Still it cannot be altogether congenial to the feelings to be suspended in mid-air; but the hypocrite is devoid of all the finer sensibilities, and the baser are of little account, therefore, sooner or later, he may degenerate to the *terra firma* of complete apehood, and become thorough somewhere. I would venture to hope for this happy consummation, if not for the destruction of the missing link so recently discovered. In that character he has the novelty of appearing as a speciality, one or more being essentially necessary to every London season. He will find illimitable laudation, and matchless hand-shakings in the West-End drawing-rooms, which perhaps may console and reconcile him to the kicks and blows he receives in the unsympathising world. All men will not dissemble. Some pay in true coin, and estimate at a just standard of worth. If the world is hard, it is often more honest than we imagine. Its inhabitants are not all rogues, thieves, hypocrites, and liars.

200 STUDIES IN LIFE AND LITERATURE.

There are many noble, and some giants of purity and truth. I do not love a hypocrite ; no man does. I wish him no injury, but desire his reformation, if he will be reformed ; if not, no reward but his deserts.

LOVE

LOVE fills the willing victim with full bliss,
That suffers no comparison. 'Tis strong,
Yet has no language to express its throng
Of new sensations, but the long ripe kiss—
When two hearts rush together in abyss
Of more than mortal joy ;—too deep for song,
Too high for wisdom, and too pure for wrong :—
There is no rapture half so fine as this.

The little loves of human-kind are sweet,
And grow in sunshine, storm, or hail, or rain ;
As Cupid shoots his careless arrow—fleet
To do soft justice, in the heart, or brain,
Or both. Those who have never felt Love's beat
Have known not Life's most fascinating pain.

LOVE.

For Godsake hold your tongue, and let me love.—DONNE.

To be in love is to be possessed—'tis in the head, the heart, the blood, the—all over.—CONGREVE.

Love is exactly like war in this ; that a soldier, though he has escaped three weeks complete o' Saturday night—may nevertheless be shot through his heart on Sunday morning.—STERNE.

IN the entire range of the many human passions there is none for force, fire, pertinacity, endurance, unselfishness, to match with love. It is the queen passion, whose dominion is the susceptible heart, and whose sceptre the obedient will of universal humanity. She fears no power, trusts no minion, suffers no coldness, tolerates no indifference, but conquers all with resistless influence and imperial authority. Her rule is absolute or nothing ; for she permits none to share her royal seat, and would crush an usurper with the bitterness and cruelty of an enraged tyrant. Thanks to the superior courtesy, higher cultivation, and finer

feeling of our age, much of the ancient cruelty is now usually lacking, but the bitterness remains with all the old acuteness of many centuries. Better rob a lioness of her whelps, and trust to Providence for deliverance, than rouse the jealous hatred of a lover by a dastardly act against his privilege and prerogative. His indignation and rude justice may be swift or slow, according to circumstances, but it will be sure. It may take many forms, more or less violent; but a traitor in the office of love will never cease to merit all the scorn, contempt, and controlled fury the injured one may exhibit on all seasonable occasions. Love is so powerful, all-absorbing, and supreme that, when once aroused to punish an insult or a wrong, is never satisfied until some kind of revenge has been taken.

Love does not always renounce the luxuries of life, or even endanger life itself for a woman. As there are many kinds of flesh, so there are many kinds of love; and because of its influence men have braved and have fought a thousand battles, but for other stakes than this irresistible type of nature. The purest and loveliest maiden that ever breathed the free air of heaven, with the sweetest eyes that ever laughed at the fine compliments paid to her ravishing charms, though she were as queenly as Juno, as beautiful as Venus

as wise as Minerva, and as chaste as Diana, would not stir the love pulses in the natures of some men. Adonis could repulse the lovely Venus, and why not a modern gallant a modern beauty. Still love and beauty in distress will never suffer for want of a champion. Rebecca, the daughter of Isaac of York, found a noble one in the wounded and exhausted but valiant Ivanhoe, when no other belted knight had the manliness or courage to combat in her behalf. True, it is one of the 'Great Unknown's' magic fictions. But it has been too often exemplified and repeated in ordinary life to be altogether a charming lie. Even the female criminal in the dock is not without her defenders, if not admirers. We see this clearly in every notable trial of a good-looking woman, and sometimes when not good-looking.

Woman is essentially Cupid's toy; but she is not the only ravisher of man. She reigns not alone in her importance and beauty. Love is as varied as it is generous. Achilles refused to shake off his sulkiness, leave his isolated tent, and did not seek the heroic Hector till Patroclus was slain. Love of Briseis silenced his arms, but love of Patroclus made them clamour for revenge. The love emanating from strong and lasting friendship is one of its most pure and unselfish phases. It will, if necessary, not only

endanger life but sacrifice it readily for the hero of its devotion. Death is better than those remorseful reproaches of the conscience, which would certainly ensue did friendship belie itself. As the soldier prefers death to dishonour, so does a man willingly embrace the same fate to save his friend.

In the early and middle ages, when dangers were as thick as bees, and as cruel as the nether regions ; when wars and assassinations were plentiful, and blood ran like water ; when kings and petty rulers forgot they were mortals and sentenced men to death like so many head of cattle—in those terribly resolute and barbarous days, innumerable were the fearful risks encountered, many were the noble exchanges transacted, when possible with the laws of honour, to save a friend from a long imprisonment, the scaffold, or an ignominious death. Then, as much as at any time, friendship's love vindicated itself, magnanimously and fully, from all supposed selfishness by the purity and sublimity of its conduct. Yet in those periods of barbarity, injustice, and bloodshed, when friendship was put to such severe tests, chivalry was said to be at its highest lustre. Outwardly, perhaps, it was ; but inwardly it was as black as the heart of the arch-traitor himself. It was the mask of hypocrisy, nay, treachery, which concealed ten

thousand malignant motives. Much of this boasted chivalry, which nineteenth century women lament the decay of so piteously and loudly, wore, as its cardinal prerogative, the open smile by daylight, but stabbed a man to death in the dark by ruffians and cut-throats. Modern men are condemned for their want of courtesy and high feeling. Chivalry is said to be extinguished in the breast of present-day manhood. It may not show itself so blandly as was the custom of the middle ages, but it exists as truly, is displayed as faithfully on all proper or reasonable occasions, and is more honest in its nature and attitude than at any time during its most courtly exercise. If there is any lack of modern gallantry and courtesy, there must be a general transformation of conduct all round; and I am afraid, were the popular sentiment spoken above a whisper, that the root of the evil would be bawled from the house-tops in no chivalrous melody.

The days of an overstrained chivalry, handsome tournaments, and polite highway robbery are past. Men and women are too earnestly engaged in the struggle of life, and have neither time nor temper to bandy unnecessary compliments about as a delighted child would a shuttle-cock. Courtesy is not dead; it is merely galvanised, according to the requirement, disposition, or attitude of the patient.

I never discover the public conduct otherwise than fair, and even generous, so long as that conduct is deserving, and is not resented for familiarity, or want of good breeding; and is not repelled by a cold, ignorant, or discourteous reception. Men in public or private are not angels; and, pardon my seeming harshness, fair tyrants, neither are women. Our frail morality cuts the best of us far short of angelhood. If women are our captivators and governors we bear their free licence and soft bondage willingly, nay, with pleasure, and even thankfulness, gratitude, and joy. All court their society, and many—ah, how many—journey a wide distance out of their proper course to be made happy by a bewitching smile, which is frequently forgotten as readily as conjured up. ‘Well, we are all mortal.’

Whatever the cold-hearted and austere cynic may construe the bluntness, churlishness, or seeming rudeness of modern Benedicks into, I believe that their apparent rough conduct is not ill feeling, but merely the honest, unthinking manner of John Bull, who is a good fellow at heart, and has a kindly nature; in fact, no national creature a better. None can censure, or become hysterical, where the grievance is only imaginary, and the injury entirely unintentional and not real. All true Englishmen honour blunt John Bull, reverence his

excellent wife, and love his beautiful daughters. And as every Englishman is proud of his nationality, alliance, and privileges, so is he proud and readily willing to yield point, on all fitting and reasonable opportunities afforded, in favour of the weaker sex, which, after all, is the stronger. A general love will do this ; but it will perform more important offices does circumstance or necessity arise.

Is there a woman or child in a burning edifice, and in peril of imminent death ; is there a man overboard ; or a gang of miners entombed ; instantly, spontaneously, there are brave, devoted, and unselfish men, not one but many, to the rescue. The love of humanity is too deeply implanted in the hearts of men for them to do other than nobly when nobleness is required. When some poor mortal is in jeopardy of losing life by a cruel or terrible manner, human nature in any, who painfully witness the impending death of a helpless victim—human nature, at this time, surges like a flood and overwhelms all thought of self in the fulness of its generous tide. A moment's reflection may render a bride a widow, a widow childless, or a child fatherless, if not an orphan, and plunge lone hearts into an intensity of bitterness and prolonged misery. The brave man rushes into danger, and is rewarded by saving life,

and also by a great inward feeling, too full for words, of having done his duty.

Is there any living mortal who lacks the deeper sympathies of humanity, and has no common love for his race, let him turn to the many heroic acts chronicled in histories and less ponderous tomes, and perhaps, if he has any awakening sense, or a conscience, he will learn, to his sorrow and dismay, that his life has been an error, his nature defective ; and may, in his remorse, stumble upon the lost part. If he has no taste for books of the graver kind let him select, for amusement only, the most beautiful, generous, and humane story ever penned—*The Christmas Carol* ; and maybe fiction will teach him what history could not.

Do books, grave or gay, effect no favourable alteration, there is still a greater teacher remaining—LIFE. Let the penurious autocrat observe the ragged urchin snatch refuse from the gutter, and transfer it with the rapidity of lightning to his mouth ; let him cast a glance on the wretched, forlorn woman, with hollow cheeks and hacking cough, crouching down in an archway to rest herself and to shelter her puny child from the cutting east wind ; let him look over his shoulder and notice the well-clad 'son of the law' compelling her to rise ; let him look back once again and he will see her staggering and struggling with the

piercing wind, friendless, homeless, and alone. After this let him mount six flights of rickety stairs, in the east or west, and note the poor old man with the glazed eye dropping into the darkness of death without a rag to cover him ; or it may be a young woman, ruined and brutalised, with a hectic flush on each wan cheek, sinking prematurely into the same awful darkness, where her shame will be hidden and her name forgotten. If there is a man existing, be he autocrat, aristocrat, democrat, or even felon, who can witness these terrible scenes with a careless mind and unquivering lip, and does nothing, not even to cast a penny, he is, methinks, dead to all the kindness, generosity, and love usually inherent in human nature.

It is recognised by all that no public or private charity can cope with the awful crime, poverty, distress, and misery of this vast London. Taken singly, or together, these various phases of city life are appalling. But a kind word honestly given often saves from a further career of crime and wrong-doing ; and a single coin, to stem and to thrust back the hideous giant of starvation. I am aware that there are many, too many, sham apostles of poverty imposing upon benevolent individuals ; but their imposture is no reason why silent charity

should be condemned as a public evil, as many misguided and straight-necked ecclesiastics would compel us to believe if they could, but fortunately they cannot. I like Carlyle's remark to Froude on charity. 'Modern life,' he said to the historian, 'doing its charity by institutions is a sad hardener of our hearts.' It is fearfully pregnant and true. Most organised charities fail in their purpose, and tend to make a man cold-hearted toward the wretched beggars of the street. And an ecclesiastic who publicly preaches against relieving these poor creatures privately and silently is to me a creature craving after power, dominion, and absolute authority in the dispensation of other people's charity, and is a glaring piece of bigotry and priest-craftism.

A parson in a village is generally the chief dispenser of charity, and more often than not his visits are unwelcome, and his inquisitiveness intolerable. If any beneficent man or woman forestalls him in relieving a destitute family he denounces it from the pulpit as a public crime, and in conversation calls it a piece of impertinent interference, and goes on to say, with all the pride of an autocrat, 'I know the family's circumstances so much better.' Alas! poor man, he wears the black coat of his order, which is his best defence; but many already observe that

it is losing much of the original respect paid to its colour and cut.

The relieving officer is another dispenser of gentle charity in a village, but he is even dreaded more than the parson ; for often his harshness is repulsive, and his rough questioning unnerving to a poor woman who wants food for a starving household. Until some other system of charity is adopted, more favourable and far-reaching, more generous, sympathising, and humane in conduct and distribution than any yet discovered, poverty will never be properly, adequately, and universally relieved, nor its attendant sufferings and miseries ameliorated. The common love of individual humanity is but an atom cast into the seething sea of vice, wretchedness, and penury, and does little ; but that little is golden sunlight to many whose virtues the world wots not of.

A common love will endure many things, and confront much danger. But there is a love which infinitely transcends this, as indeed it transcends all loves, common or otherwise. There is no love superior or stronger, none that will brave or bear so much, as the particular phase—the love of a man for a maid. What will an infatuated lover not tolerate, suffer, and endure for the woman of

his affections? There is no estimating his extravagance or his folly; for, by the peculiarity of his office, he holds a special dispensation to be—not himself. Instead, he is but a semblance of that once reasonable individual, transformed by two drooping eyes into a mad being, who fancies that other men, not in love, are cold-hearted, unintelligent, selfish, cynical creatures.

Love, by common consent, is sweet, but it makes startling creations. Some even border on the ludicrous and inane. Alexander growing indolent and effeminate among his Persian beauties, and Antony languishing in the lustful arms of the far-famed beautiful Cleopatra, are two well-known instances out of many, showing the extraordinary force of love, as exerted by the loveliness of ravishing women. The unadulterated love of a lover has no match, no equal, and is therefore never excelled. Is a man fairly plunged into its eddies, he will forget all else, and yield himself up a willing victim to its innumerable charms.

Is the lover a statesman, politics have to wait like poor suitors in the ante-room; is he a philosopher, philosophy is banished, since that of love is sufficient to turn his brain by its intricacies; is he military, he readily submits to be drilled like a common soldier by the pretty lips of his charmer; is he an ecclesiastic, he selects his texts

from the *Canticles*, and his sermons are overcharged with the tenderness of his predominant passion; is he medical, the anatomy and diseases of the physical system afford him no light as to the anatomy and disease of his heart or brain in love: he is astray, for it is something quite foreign to his experience and practice, and in the entire range of all his favourite prescriptions he cannot discover one of service; is he a poet, well, *he* is to be excused, since he merely commits the folly of his art by inditing love-sonnets to his mistress; and indeed most lovers are guilty of the same weakness. The poet's escape is by virtue of his office, for all of his metal are supposed to be in love from the moment they pen their first gentle rhyme till death claims them for his own; and by this virtue are allowed a sea of sentiment and a blank licence of folly.

All lovers are breathers of soft sentences and writers of tender nonsense. It is significant that they cannot restrain themselves to verbal courtship, but must run into reams of foolscap, which are afterwards read to a delighted audience, should the writers be so unhappy as to appear in a court of law for breach of promise. 'Benjamin Goldfinch'—so happily essayed by Mr John Hare—said, when suspecting his young wife of being over-partial to the curate, 'there are always writ-

ings,' and afterwards, to his own dismay and remorse, discovered there were writings, but, alas ! poor Benjamin, they were his own. Said Benedick to Beatrice when their love-sick sonnets were discovered to each other, 'Here's our hands against our hearts ;' and immediately were eager to wed, if only for pity. However, Cupid is a merry god, and must accomplish his designs of love in his own pretty manner. If lovers write softly they are pleased with their nonsense, and what affords happiness and delight, after an innocent fashion, is not entirely useless and vain.

A lover enjoys a very peculiar temperament, and will go to extreme lengths in his eagerness to be kind, and will even do absurd things for the woman of his affections. Call her by any light, still innocent name, and he will instantly renounce your friendship ; flirt with her, and he will reward with a just hatred ; but rob him of her love, and the Furies could not exercise greater enmity and revenge. More tragedies have been enacted under the influence of love than by any other passion or motive. One man is often made happy at the expense of another's misery ; not the mere sentimental misery of shallow love-sick swains, but the bitter and the deathless, which eats into flesh, and survives to the shadowless passing of the spirit. Petrarch never ceased to remember and to love his

Laura ; Dante his Beatrice ; Burns his Mary ; Keats his Fanny ; nor Byron the Mary Chaworth who was both his good angel and his bad. These women formed the poets' destinies. Had their loves been happier, would have reversed them. As it is their names will only perish but with the names of the immortals themselves.

The love of a man for a woman is no mean thing, when it can entirely change the tenor of his life, awake his genius, shape his career, and render his name famous for all time. Could the lives of our illustrious men be apprehended in the abstract, doubtless love would appear playing a very important part in pointing the hand of Fate, arousing the hitherto dormant energies of their minds, making them pillars of knowledge, champions of liberty, and giants in genius. Every man's strength is increased by the love of one gentle woman. It invigorates his heart and brightens his life in some incomprehensible, but paramount manner. Indeed no man fully understands what a woman's love really means, can never measure its influence upon his life, can never fathom its fullness, nor mark exactly how or when it moulded its destiny. One pure woman's love, whether of a beautiful maid or a true, devoted wife, is as a breath from the fields of Elysium, and equips a man with almost fabulous power. Is she maid, he

exerts his highest faculties to the utmost to make himself worthy of her love. Is she wife, to nourish, comfort, and render her happy is not, to him, merely a duty, but the supreme pleasure of his existence. Her heart is his home, and her affections the elixir of life. He who has never known love has never exercised or made himself acquainted with the purest, sweetest, and loftiest attribute of his nature ; nor has ever measured and compassed the capacity and intensity of his soul, which in love is transformed into a new creation of excellence, sublimity, unselfishness, tenderness, light.

Human life and expression are not restricted in their range. A man may place his affections on many things, without infringing on, or lessening the affection he entertains for his sweetheart, wife, or child. He may love his honest glass of grog, avoiding intemperate habits, and still love, with all the ardour of his nature, those whom it is his duty and happiness to love, comfort, sustain, and cheer. A rigid abstinence with a temperate man is not necessary, and is often as harmful in another sense as a constant intemperance. An inordinate love and excessive use of wine is both deplorable and degrading. But when utilised with respect, tends to increase bodily health, give tone to

the stomach, animation to the mind, vivacity to the conversation, and recovery from mental or physical fatigue and exhaustion, and becomes one of the most pure and useful necessities of mankind.

A man may also love his horses or his dogs, his lands or his game, and yet not trespass upon the love and duty lying nearer his heart. Nature is both plentiful and beautiful in her gifts, and happily distinguishes and distributes them with a critical hand. To observe a favourite horse put his nose into his mistress's hand, or rub his face against her bosom, is one of the most intelligent and happy scenes in mute creation. The same may be said of a faithful dog. Sir Walter Scott had many, and it is one of his many virtues that he loved them with all the kindliness and affection of his great nature. His last return to Abbotsford, shortly before his death, with his favourites fawning upon him to welcome him back, and his tears fawning upon them, is an instance of genuine love for God's dumb creation, worthy of the author of the *Waverley Novels*, who could paint the dull swineherd Gurth with a deep affection for his dog Fangs.

Again, a man may love the recreation of the theatre, neither diminishing domestic love, nor degenerating into a mere worldling, who can penetrate no deeper into the stern realities of life than the weak and transitory semblances of the stage.

Amusement, like love, requires to be exercised wisely or it will prove a curse. There is no sense, no proper diversion, and no manliness in witnessing the shadowed indecencies as exhibited by the minions of some managers for public entertainment. In London we have some noble theatres, and the plays acted in them do not fail to raise the tone of the public mind and morals, and amuse in a genuine manner. But no one can be blind that there are places of amusement—so-called—where the exhibitions have a demoralising effect, and whose only tendency is to corrupt and to lead the ignorant and foolish into the meshes of vice. Their amendment or their removal is difficult, but time will transform and purify many things, and in her onward course will not rush by these without applying a remedy. London may be proud of her temples of entertainment as a whole. For a city so vast, their purity is miraculous. Even the cloth cannot be censured by the most fastidious of congregations for witnessing so excellent a Benedick as Mr Irving, and so incomparable a Beatrice as Miss Ellen Terry. And I was glad to notice than many ecclesiastics did revel in the luxuries of 'Much ado about Nothing' when produced at the Lyceum last year.

Excepting human love, perhaps there is no other phase so general and lasting as the love

of books. I do not mean the love displayed by the ardent book collector, who is open to give a fabulous price for what he considers a bargain, or a prize, for his love is often more fanatical than not. Indeed, it generally develops into a hopeless mania. I allude more particularly to the love of good sound books in history, fiction, poetry, biography, or travel, which certain members of all classes manifest when released from their professional duties, and to all who derive a proper and reasonable pleasure in the works of the giant minds of our great literature. Years ago, in many middle-class families, and some upper, it was more customary than it is now for the best reader of the family to read aloud on a winter's evening from the pages of some favourite author, while the others sat listening round a blazing fire of coal, peat, or logs, as country or county might indicate. But customs change with the times, usually for the better, still not always. I think this is a case in point where the change was not wholesome or profitable to the joint family. In all families there is generally one bookish individual, whose reading aloud is instruction and knowledge to the remainder. What *he* now gains by a silent and closer application, much is lost to *them* by a total indifference to all genuine books. He also loses much, since

pertinent questions increase knowledge wonderfully.

A love of books is unquestionably a passion to be cherished, respected, and cultivated assiduously, of course within legitimate and rational bounds. It is pure, elevating, and instructive. Knowledge is coupled with amusement, and is increased by an easy and delightful method. The mind grows with a book, and if properly digested will produce an enlightened and superior conversation, which has some degree of edification, teaching common sense, and is not altogether a polite jargon of scandal or society small-talk, which is as insufferable as it is stupid. A well-informed man is worth a thousand inane ones in society, when he can be induced to converse, which is frequently a difficult matter with no better audience than fools and blockheads, although Edmund Burke was a noble exception.

But whatever society may think of a well-read man, or a wise man of society, the earth swings on at her usual pace, thinking of neither ; and love still continues to stir the pulses, and to throb in the hearts of her myriad creatures, from the palace to the hovel. It is common ground to all, and whoever enters the lists tastes the nectar of life, and has every possibility of becoming a crowned

victor. She who dwells in his heart is to him the sun of the tournament, and may, with some slight persuasion, become something more—to wit, a blushing bride, an excellent wife; and higher bliss is for no man outside Eve's Paradise, and he who expects more is worthy of none. Love, in the shape of a woman, may sometimes be hard, bitter, cruel, tormenting, but she is not to be spurned, underrated, despised, neglected. She must be loved, flattered, coaxed, and won. When the culminating point is reached the whole universe has nothing more to offer. The Fairies have performed their office faithfully, and it is for the happy man to honour their confidence by yielding a deep devotion and earnest love to the woman of his choice.

ENVY

P

DISREPUTABLE passion of mankind :—

Thou envy ; that just men scorn, loathe, despise ;
That wisdom leaves to hirelings, who would rise
Unworthily upon another's mind ;—
As traitors mount in blood, by being blind
To honour, virtue, justice, reverence, ties
Of friendship, love. Ye hail from blacker skies
Than those the great know, or the noble find.

We mark thy vicious presence, and forsake
Thy curse personified in some weak fool,
Who will not in his wiser knowledge shake
Thy tendrils from his heart. He lives by rule
Of self-created baseness, and doth stake
And barter life to thy use as a tool.

ENVY.

Though sundry minds in sundry sort do deem,
Yet worthiest wights yield praise for every pain ;
But envious brains do nought, or light, esteem
Such stately steps as they cannot attain :
For whoso reaps renown above the rest,
With heaps of hate shall surely be oppressed.

SIR WALTER RALEIGH,

Good and great men may secure themselves from guilt, but not from envie.—SIR ROBERT COTTON.

What a wretched and apostate state is this ! To be offended with excellence, and to hate a man because we approve him.—STEELE.

ENVY is a black bat in the human mind, devoted to the dusk, and fond of noiseless flights. It is the most execrable passion, the most despicable failing, and the most debasing, degenerating, and even brutish vice to which the natures of some men are subject. It is not an abstract evil, but a general one, and that is its only apology. That it is an evil, a vice, and not a misconception to be overlooked and excused, I am well aware ; that it is active, though silent in its evolutions and effects, I am perfectly sensible ; but that it can be utterly eradicated from

the hearts of men, as some deliberately assert, I am not so apprehensive or confident. So long as human nature is crowned with its glorious attribute of liberty, so long as its passions are unfettered and free, so long as it enjoys its present environment, so long it will usurp the throne of virtue in the lives of many men, and so long will it have to be tolerated and endured as an incurable vice and invulnerable evil. As a universal product of devildom there is no method, no influence, no force, or engine of power by which its intemperate viciousness can be annihilated, or its degrading tendency crushed. I do not asseverate that its violence cannot be stemmed or modified, either by an unflinching attitude of defence, or by a generous action of conduct toward the deluded creature who fancies his envy an accomplishment, if not a virtue. Many things, wise and unwise, can be effected by a firm determination, by unflagging energy, by imperturbable perseverance, or, if my readers will have it so, by a bold dare-devilism, which not unfrequently answers admirably, if not with a greater degree of success than any other conceivable method, except that of overwhelming and burning kindness.

The courageous dash at the enemy fearlessly, and if such conduct is rash, imprudent, dangerous, or impolitic, it often prevents much discontent

saves many lives, spares miles of perambulation, rescues the impatient and brave from days of tedious waiting, which is not only distasteful, but absolutely offensive to the valiant by nature, and also to the confident by training, experience, and forecast. Dare-devilism may appear obnoxious to many; it may be the least bit hot-headed and feverish, as though it would profit by cupping, but it has won England many an important battle, both by land and sea; has added many a bill of liberty to her statute book; has made many really deserving men famous; and has often kept both public honour and private virtue pure.

Almost every species of greatness, power, place, or well-merited success is tracked by the demon envy. No sooner is genius rewarded, or worthiness substantially or properly noticed, than a thousand malignant hearts start into being, and would canker their happiness or fame if they could. Where possible, envy will put into practice the foul machinations of its nature, to undermine, to overthrow, and to accomplish a complete ruin. No service will be considered too mean, no method too vile, and no instrument too base to effect its insidious purpose, or to consummate its ignoble designs. His disreputable work once satisfactorily completed, the envious

man would be the last to reflect upon his shameful measures.

The mask of envy is the mask of the devil, and the wearer his servile tool. If he cannot rise to the beauty and dignity of honourable conduct, it is because of his masterly prompter in evil, and the self-created defect of his nature, which is too mean, too little, too contemptible, and can form no conception of genuine worth and pure greatness. The envious man suffers from a partially asphyxiated soul; on the moral side the asphyxiation is almost total, and can neither comprehend goodness in a legitimate manner, nor achieve it. He apprehends its tendency and influence as wisely as any man, but his apprehension is solely constituted of fear, and he labours to counteract, to blast, and to crush an atom of goodness, if it is goodness he particularly envies, as a cruel man would a worm.

No envious man labours for goodness, virtue, or nobility of character for himself, although he covets all these venerated phases, and envies them in others. That he does so is not because of any love for purity, honesty, or integrity of life, but because it strains and tortures his soul with a thousand agonies to observe his fellow-man respected and honoured for something which he does not possess himself. It is this very malignancy which renders envy so unlovely and vile.

It is the fable of the dog in the manger reacted and repeated continually. He does not want or even cherish what would be useful to another, still he clings to it with the intense firmness of a death-grip, as he absolutely hates to mark another enjoying what he has neither the relish nor the nature to enjoy himself. It is an absurd, hideous, and deadly trait. He who holds it with the petulance of a child, the pertinacity of an idiot, and the intolerance of a bigot, as many do, has lost all sense of the sublime, has no idea of the beautiful, and cannot, even partially, derive pleasure from the fine, exquisite, and glorious attributes of nature and life. The call of duty is to him an abomination, the liberty of a people an absurdity, and the morality of a nation a foolish conceit. Living under an eclipse of manhood it is only his selfish and servile lusts which are important to him, and worthy of a struggle to pamper and maintain. A braying ass is better than an unmanly man, who has forfeited, even sold the birthright of his nature. An ass has some apology for his melody, the unfrocked mortal has neither melody nor apology. And if a prophet instructed him to go to the ass and learn music he would consider himself flagrantly insulted; when, in reality, the prophet would be conferring a favour, for the musical ass does bray for something, if only to be

weather-wise or to listen to the sound of his own voice ; while the envious man whines for nothing he either really wants or can rightly utilise. Alas ! poor men, with envy in your hearts and on your tongues, that a braying ass should rise superior to you in music and conduct. Certainly

There are more things in heaven and earth . . .
Than are dreamt of in your philosophy.

Envious men are among the least rational, and most unjust of mankind. They have lame minds, but lamer hearts ; and are doomed, by their own self-created passion, to be as senseless as they are treacherous. True they are not devoid of some degree of sense—that of the loose and perfidious cast—the sense to advance their own paltry interests by questionable methods ; but they are utterly bereft of that loftier kind, which we baptise ‘common,’ and which finds its purest outcome and highest duty in noble manhood and honourable service. There can be no sense, or even semblance of that natural instinct and necessary acquirement, in envying the position, gifts, talents, genius, and fame of a fellow-mortal which, by the envious creature’s little nature, could not be appropriated, esteemed, or cultivated in a successful or creditable manner by himself. The common hedge-sparrow, or ordinary barn-door fowl might,

with the same display of justice, expect to rise to the dignity of the golden eagle of lofty flights, as the envious man to wear the honours of genius, labour, or morality belonging to another. Did he do so it would be a freak of nature, and paradox turned topsy-turvy. Shakespeare's mighty intellect ran wild at certain seasons, and played a thousand fantastic tricks smaller minds would have stood aghast at. So it is with envy, though I trust the ghost of Shakespeare will pardon the comparison. It is sometimes discovered in men great by genius, but not so often by nature, as indeed no nature can be altogether great where envy forms an integrant part.

Oliver Goldsmith, however, presses closely toward being an exception, but not fully. His envy was conspicuous; still, both by nature and genius, he was excellent, could we forget this one derogatory trait. He is a man and a writer we all love, and could even embrace with the most tender feeling of affection. His writings touch our keenest sensibilities with sublime pathos, exquisite humour, and almost divine beauty. We are so charmed by them that we could forgive nearly any defect in his character, as I am abundantly convinced our partiality readily pardons this one faltering vice which our better knowledge and love of virtue ought to condemn. His nature was

so gentle, so affectionate, and lovable in its beautiful sympathies for the wretched creatures of the then London streets ; for the hungry singing for bread ; for the poor drudge of an author fighting desperately in his rags with an adverse fate to gain a pitiful livelihood ; for all who were miserable, indigent, persecuted, and unsuccessful in life, that our frail natures make strong efforts to forget to censure, and stronger endeavours in ceasing to remember that Oliver Goldsmith ever had a failing, and that, moreover, a base one. He has two grand, even magnificent apologies, more than most men charged with this detracting vice—a great nature minus the envy—and works which, for their many excellent qualities and transcendent beauties, can match with any produced during the same period, and take rank, with the natural ease of genius, with many of the best authors, whose works live in the hearts of millions, and stand enduring for all time.

Partiality for a favourite author, however, should not lead any one into an error of judgment, or cause a single human being to give licence to an injustice toward virtue. Literary envy cannot be excused on any grounds, not even with an Oliver Goldsmith for an apologist. It is an evil—perhaps no greater in literature, unless it is puffery or unjust criticism—and as an evil it has no defence

and must be condemned. Literature can afford it no place, and authors—whether great or small—had better renounce the profession of letters altogether, than drag into it a pitiable, ignominious spirit of envy, which, after all, does them the greater injury in life, character, position, success, fame. Few will stoop to yield honour, or elect to enter into familiar friendship with an author of this disreputable stamp. True, Goldsmith lost no degree of favour from his contemporaries, but lived in intimate and affectionate relations with the greatest. Still he is an exception. If, on hearing of his death, Reynolds threw aside his palette and brushes for the day, Johnson lapsed into a moodier silence, and Burke burst into tears, it was by reason of their generous dispositions, which forgot his little harmless spirit of envy, and only remembered his many excellent virtues, his intense humanity, genuine artlessness, and kind disposition.

To extend our sympathies, after this noble manner, to every envious literary drubber, would be both foolish and absurd. All authors with a streak of envy are not Goldsmiths. His envy stung but little, if at all. In reality it stabbed none but himself. It was of so childish, petulant, and harmless a nature, that Johnson bandied it about as a piece of playful wit. It could be dispelled with the slightest show of sympathy

or flattery extended toward him. 'Dr Major' would say, 'Come, come, Dr Goldsmith, I was rude to you this afternoon, forgive me!' and 'Dr Minor' would instantly melt into good humour, and his eyes fill with tears.

Literary envy is rarely of so innocent and unoffending a character as this; but frequently develops into downright malevolence and flagitious animosity. It is a matter of intense regret that any 'writer of books' should descend to this species of vile trickery toward a brother of the same gentle craft. Treachery of this cast deserves flogging, not so much with the horse-whip as with a few powerful lines of biting satire in a modern Dunciad, with as much weight, fame, popularity, and sale as little satirical Alexander Pope's. The administration of the horse-whip could only be witnessed by a very limited number of spectators, while the masterly portrait, drawn in satire, would be read and remembered by thousands. The envious author treated after this fashion would be honoured with a pillory far more violent than a Prynne's or a Defoe's—the latter's being rather pleasant than otherwise—but would find one only to be equalled in severity by a Dennis's or a Curll's.

Envy has been the bane of most successful authors, who have been insulted, inflicted, and

harassed at every step by literary rancour and malignant abuse. A great writer may stand in an unshaken attitude against the envious torrent, but he cannot escape it. Secure in his honest worth and honourable fame, few recognised authors in our day can suffer from the shafts of envy. They rattle on their invulnerable coat of fearless integrity, and fall to the ground harmless. Innocence and honesty are more than a match for envy; and its creatures only fritter away their time, spend their strength, and waste their energies for empty vanity and future years of despair in attempting impossibilities. At the present time no really great author, once substantially acknowledged by the public, can be written down, or will permit premature decay by an unjust criticism or an envious one. The great, like the bold, have nothing to fear.

Envy of any phase is revolting to men of pure ideas, superior character, and strict morality. Literary envy is as despicable as any. It was practised largely by Grub Street writers, empty of stomach and ragged at the knees. Their envious lubrications frequently purchased them bread, and made many a rascally bookseller rich, and rendered him more than satisfied with his shrewdness. All writings put into their presses had to be forged into gold; no matter by what

process. To the peace of many, most of these infamous methods of literary vice departed with the eighteenth century. Still they were not quite dead, since Southey felt their sting when they printed his youthful effusion, *Wat Tyler*, surreptitiously. That democratic poem was no child for a Laureate. The envious fastened it upon him, and it is to his credit that he acknowledged his fatherhood so temperately and uprightly.

If literary envy has been greatly subdued, and has lost most of the old madness and fire, it has but followed the way of many other ignorant and vicious systems. The envy of Courts is but the shadow of its former self. Indeed, could the envy of the Courts of Elizabeth and Anne start into life for a moment, it would pale with anger and indignation, and straightway renounce and utterly condemn its present descendant, which has lost flesh, blood, and spirit. A courtier could scarcely subsist or measure progress in those Courts without putting it into activity. Failing that, their weapon was corruption, or a hot, head-strong ambition; not the ambition to fill a high place worthily and with honour, but to satisfy the inordinate lust of personal distinction and political aggrandisement. Almost every courtier was envious of his brother, and every statesman his colleague. Did Queen Bess smile on one, it stabbed

the heart, and almost the reputation of another. It was not so with Queen Anne. No smile of hers could throw a man into raptures, nor was it held in any great esteem. She was tormented, almost to the death, by the envy and cunning artifices of petty statesmen. She endured what Elizabeth would have crushed with all the energy of her royal father. The political intrigue and backstairs government of the Court of Anne, has rarely, if ever, been equalled by any Court of the Kings or Queens of England. There has been envy of a tougher metal and firmer type; envy playing for higher stakes, but none so sly, perfidious, insignificant, mean. It disgraced the statesmen of the period, and sacrificed much disinterestedness of service and nobility of character.

Elizabeth had as many intriguing servants, statesmen, and courtiers; but they had more chivalry, high-mindedness, and reckless daring. The most foolish and peurile exhibition of envy displayed during her long reign was unquestionably the pitiable conduct of Essex when he marshalled his 2000 men, attired in orange, into the tilt-yard, to eclipse Raleigh, both in numbers and magnificence; Essex having discovered that the honourable and courteous knight intended dressing his few men in that colour. It was a piece of envy, imprudence, and folly, which was not

without its bitterness, when Essex afterwards tilted with Raleigh in the lists and was humbled before the spectators and his Queen, which no proud nobleman could endure with credit and magnanimity.

I am not rash enough to assert that there is no political envy extant now. There is more than sufficient, more than can be properly coped with, and infinitely more than can be staved off with a pension. Political envy is in full activity, and, as a cordial for those who suffer from its vital influence, always will be outside Utopia. It is a disease in which medicine has no power. It is classed among the *Incurables*, and must be treated with calm endurance. Whoever volunteers to undertake the duties of physician will have a thankless, even fruitless task. For there is no man so painful and austere to combat, or to argue with, as an envious one. One of the plates in some editions of *Paradise Lost* represent Satan belching forth sulphurous smoke, which is an apt emblem of the creature of envy, could we descry his execrable passion in visible operation and employment. But it is too subtle to be seen. Envy is of the darkness; it stings like scorpions, entangles like serpents, and 'blasts' like *She*.

Malignant envy is often its own punishment. It shelters death in its own vitals; every dis-

appointment increases misery ; gives additional torment ; and the inward rage consequent upon failure kills happiness and every noble sentiment, like deadly poison. There is no man more miserable than the envious one. He is restless ; always sowing his cankered seed, yet never finds the harvest so pleasant or abundant as he could desire. The fruit is rotten at the core. He understands better than any man that nothing is so beautiful as truth. He reaps his knowledge from his own wretched destiny and bitter fate.

Wise men sometimes stoop to folly ; great men to weakness, if not vice ; good consistent men to neither, but envious men to both : not as an occasional fault, like the wise and great, but as a general one, which affords no cessation and no rest. It is one of those deep-set free passions, which is continual, powerful, and all-absorbing ; turning the victim's heart to gall, and his life to one long series of anguish, discontent, and terrible despair.

LABOUR.

THE curse of labour is the breath of health,
And not to be despised. He who would thrive
Must use his talent in this busy hive—
Where brother crushes brother for proud wealth—
Or perish, or renounce by force, or stealth
The claims of noble manhood, and contrive
Mechanical existence. Knaves connive
And flatter folly for their commonwealth.

Fools work for nought, vain-glory, or parade ;
And some to gain the warm applause of men ;
While others spend their strength for a decade
In gathering filthy lucre to their ken.
The honest man will never be betrayed
By semblances, and reaps the fruit of ten.

LABOUR.

LABOUR was the son of NECESSITY, the nursling of HOPE, and the pupil of ART.—JOHNSON.

The sum of wisdom is, that the time is never lost that is devoted to work.—EMERSON.

Produce! produce! Were it but the pitifullest infinitesimal fraction of a product, produce it in God's name. CARLYLE.

THE idle man is the no-man. His life is one continual lie, which only terminates with death; perhaps not then, for what occurs beyond that seeming state of rest, none have sufficient power of penetration to discover. If the devil of the scriptural strainers and literalists is there, the idle man will not be overlooked; for according to theological deductions, the votaries of idleness are his, root and branch, notwithstanding that he fully appreciates the man who is always employed, but, of course, in his service—going through such small evolutions as tumbling into folly, turning somersaults with mischief, and embracing every

species of evil with more than fraternal kindness and affection. The wiser plan would be to propitiate, like the devil-worshippers of old ; but the wisest would be to renounce his allegiance altogether, and to abandon idleness as a terrible mistake and an intolerable vice.

The curse of do-nothingism is held in such repute that it has grown into an art. It was ever a natural instinct, which under the pernicious influence of dilettantism has been cultivated, pruned, and carefully reared into a polite and necessary requirement of society. But it is not every one who can worship at its shrine with credit or success. It appears easy, but in reality it is a difficult art. The uninitiated would find idleness dull, its intricacies perplexing, and the situation embarrassing and delicate ; but the true idler is never perplexed, embarrassed, or dull, although he suffers from something which has a very close affinity to the latter, but which, in his dilettantism, he pronounces to be *ennui*.

Modern society is satiated with fashionable idleness, which has neither health, common sense, virtue, nor anything really generous and noble. There is infinite apology for what appears to be genuine and superior ; but its hollowness is like gauze, easily penetrated and torn. The society man has none other than over-polite eyes, and sees

not, will not, or perhaps cannot, since he has also inflicted his sight with self-blindness. He does not see or comprehend what the unpolite man, in his rage and hatred of all pretence, falsehood, and sham, would rend asunder from top to bottom, exposing nothing more beautiful than vice, rags, attenuated frames, or, maybe, human bodies petrified into statues of clay, with iron running through the limbs to retain a firm shape and proper appearance. Look deep into the eyes, there is no lustre visible; break the plaster figure into a thousand pieces and no heart will ever be discovered. Alas! that society should be nothing sounder or better than ordinary modeller's putty.

Society then is a skeleton of appearances, always, of course, excepting the hideous cross-bones, although they exist in another form, less horrible—in the shape of puff-boxes, elegant phrases, ready smiles, and fairy-like embraces. This polished skeleton suffers from an inward viciousness which, to the student of human nature, is not the less apparent and real because stripped of all coarseness. The internal disease is usually more malignant than the external, and more insidious and fatal in development. Of society this is doubly true. The most flagrant diseases exist, and very few seek for their removal, or seemingly require a better state of health. They are rather nursed

with the most vigilant attention, fondled as pets and hugged as lovers. In society there is a general want of sincerity, which is one of its worst traits. There is no nobility or greatness of character, no employment of the mind, or activity of the hand, in any useful sense. There is no labour that can recommend its issues, either to the forces of Nature which require and demand it (not so much as a cherished prerogative as an essential duty), or to men who discover their highest obligation and service in the utility of the hand or mind.

An inactive life is to be condemned, not only on moral but on physical grounds. It is the bane of the human body from which a thousand ills arise. Labour is a grave responsibility. It is the safeguard of our material system, and one of the best promoters of health, and not the deadly destructor, as many sentimental creatures who hate work imagine. There is no necessity for any one to labour like a galley-slave, but there is very serious necessity for most men to recognise their close affinity to Nature, and that they must labour, or suffer ill-health, starve, or die.

Certificates of death seldom tell the truth in the fullest sense. There is some hypocrisy in a medical man who can play hide-and-seek with the dark angel. Still there is some little excuse, for they often indulge in perplexities through

insufficient knowledge. Certainly certificates of death would appear novel if inscribed '*Death from idleness*,' but the novelty would not depart one iota from the truth. Doubtless it would give offence and pain to the surviving relatives and friends, but if they looked intently they might learn wisdom from the magical inscription, and work with all possible earnestness to redeem many idle years. They would be most profoundly astonished to find one morning that their long-standing *liver complaint* had taken wings and escaped from its ancient cage. Another day, after dinner, they would be startled to discover that their digestive apparatus was no longer out of repair, but in capital working order. Their associates would also learn that their language had grown purer, and less curses vented at the miseries of mortal existence. Yet nothing of this happier aspect would be performed by miracles, but merely by the natural process of reasonable labour. As most people manufacture their own devil, so they create their own diseases. And those who uncreate or prevent them, after this common-sense method, might pardonably fancy themselves in the possession of the philosopher's stone or the elixir of life. In their discovery of health they would be as jubilant as boys at play, and as happy as monkeys in a wood, and none but

the devil would grow angry at their delight. If they required being chained to earth, as persons suspected of being on the eve of travelling in foreign countries without leave, or departing surreptitiously in the night, neglecting to say good-bye, it would redound more to their credit than disparagement. There is pardon for a proper elation, which is not always a whisky one; but for a sour idleness, it has enough misery gnawing at its own vitals to perpetuate an eternal despair that pardon would be out of place, and of no avail.

As a nation we have degenerated into sentimentality, affectation, and general dilettantism. We are not so hardy and vigorous as our fathers were. We may be as well able to repel an attack, or to maintain our national greatness and dignified position, but it must be done by chosen men. With the death of William III. departed the last of our great warrior kings. Most of them down to his time had led their armies to battle, had borne the hardships of foreign campaigns, had experienced the furious ferocity of a bloody fight, had shared with their brave soldiers the honours of victory, and, on rare occasions, the disasters of defeat. The kings of this temper and metal now sleep with the past. Our battles are now fought and won by proxy. Still England does not suffer in military renown or martial

glory from the decay of kingly inactivity on the battlefield. By our modern method of exercising martial government, England is a stupendous gainer. However much standing armies were disliked till the advent of the first Georges, none can dispute their indispensability to our national system at the present time. A standing army is England's greatest security. It is the saviour of trade, the defender of the people, and the safeguard of all.

When wars must be tolerated and endured to assert, to consolidate, or to maintain the constitutional liberties or national greatness of England or her colonies, the fighting will be better performed by proxy than by the king and his ministers. To ensure success in war the army must now be well organised, the generals proficient and experienced, the soldiers courageous, well-disciplined, and trained assiduously to the art of warfare. If there is not ample and solid preparation, propitious circumstances will avail little. War is no longer a medley, but a difficult science, which must be carefully taught and extensively cultivated. England can no longer depend upon the bills and scythes, which were prominent in the hastily-gathered and disorganised army of our last Saxon King, nor on those brave bands of volunteers who were not

much better armed in Elizabeth's time, though formed to repel the Spanish Armada. She could not rely upon a similar army for defence and victory, even if led by another Iron Duke. A stout English heart can do much toward ensuring success on a field of battle, but it is weak without discipline, and could not stand against an elaborate European army without sustaining defeat. If blows must be given and received, the soldier by profession is the best qualified individual to give and take. The spade and the yard-measure—the latter temporarily barbed with steel—would do little toward striking terror into the hearts of the enemy, or winning an important battle. They might kill lizards and worms on the field, but not men. The primitive weapons of the savage would be as useful, even more so, backed as they were with an insatiable thirst for blood, and intense desire for cruelty and brutality. By our modern science of war, it is essential that our battles, like our parliamentary struggles, should be fought by proxy. There is no safer method, and none wiser. Most of our best institutions are supported entirely by this judicious, and only remaining process.

To be prosperous and successful every trade and profession must be distinct and self-subsistent. There are many excellent men in our day who

could hold several positions with credit, honour, and splendid results, but it is not necessary they should do so.

Cromwell had his *Sea-General* in the person of gallant Robert Blake. No nobler sailor or soldier ever lived, but we do not require him. No matter whether it was a sea-battle or a land-siege, Blake could conduct either with the same intrepid courage, the same display of talent, reap the same success, and trumpet forth the same high-sounding notes of victory. These two branches of service are now rigidly separated, and it is not requisite, neither is it compatible to the safety of our constitution or constitutional interest that they should be fused into one. The labour of fighting being accomplished by proxy, the labour of civilians can be effected without the annoyance of interruption, and has the advantage of an honourable security. Trade prospers while, perhaps, the army is enduring privation, and is fighting gallantly for our best interests and for the maintenance of our national prestige and strength.

Every class of labour being distinct, a greater opportunity is afforded to each separate division, department, or phase to perfect its own ideal. The man who attempts everything, and succeeds in nothing, is a pitiful fool, and usually an idle one. None but the great by nature can labour

auspiciously in any province ; and they but rarely. An universal worker effects his divers duties in multiplied sections of labour more by gift than acquirement ; but universal prosperity is achieved by the unique gift being supplemented by the tedious acquisition of required knowledge.

Labour is life, or, at least, the cardinal agent in its preservation. In the light and circumstance of our constitution and environment it cannot be viewed so much a radical evil as a tremendous necessity for good. For the general health of our complicated physical system, with its host of hovering diseases, it is indispensable. And for the daily sustenance of those who have no independent means it is an absolute essentiality. A man must labour to live. Of course there are innumerable knaves infesting the streets, squares, saloons, and houses of public entertainment who revel in sufficient cunning to elude the laborious task of gaining an honest livelihood. With these I have no sympathy ; and none also for the poor, deluded creatures who pamper them in idleness, if not in common luxuries, and afterwards find themselves deceived, perhaps mercilessly robbed. Nevertheless, the punishment of a knave is often severe, and his cunning and idle mode of life is not without its kicks and blows. Fortune is perverse, frequently adverse, and no class of mendicants—

and knaves are no better—feel her capriciousness more than they.

The beauty, nobility, purity, or propriety of our life solely depends upon our own efforts. Character is a self-creation. We may suffer reverses, but if they are to be conquered an indomitable courage and unflagging perseverance must be constantly displayed. This earth is not an open playground to practise 'fantastic tricks before high heaven' in, and to generally behave like mountebanks, clowns, or fools; neither is life a dream, or a huge joke to be toyed or trifled with. Earnest men will find the first a stern arena of many conflicts and manifold struggles against failure, adversity, treachery, knavery, superstition, vice; and the second, a terrible reality with a thousand pains to convince that it is no lie.

Whatever conceptions we may entertain of human life and its issues, idleness, in any shape or form, ought not to be tolerated. It robs life of more than half its possible glory. It is an insult to Nature, and an insult which she will ultimately redress. She always remains true to her fixed and immovable laws, and is incessantly labouring to establish and confirm their just and indisputable rights. No man can lay siege to her stronghold, trample on her challenge, or battle against her glorious but rigid armies of truth without receiving

mortal, if not immortal injury in the conflict. If Nature is austere and unswerving, her harshness is more than redeemed by her impartiality and justice. She is never false or treacherous, either to herself or humanity. Standing eternally just, she is the pillar of truth and the monument of integrity.

The labours of life are not to be measured so much by what they visibly produce, as by the efforts and energies actually employed and exhausted in the production. To the vulgar eye the labours of Wren appear infinitely greater than those of Newton ; yet none but the ignorant doubt the superior production which, in Newton's case, was a startling discovery. Sir Christopher has a St Paul's Cathedral and a Greenwich Hospital visible to every eye ; but what has Sir Isaac to reveal ? Visibly nothing, but invisibly the *Law of Gravitation*, almost the greatest discovery of any age. No one doubts the mighty genius of Wren, or questions the immense labour devoted in producing his splendid specimens of architecture ; yet when we turn to Newton, the philosopher, we apprehend the vaster mental labour required to demonstrate and to conclusively substantiate, prove, and establish his tremendous discovery. Wren laboured manfully, and even gloriously, both mentally and otherwise, in towering his magnificent masterpieces

to the skies, but Newton the more acutely and ideally.

I might urge another case in point—perhaps a ridiculous one, and certainly self-evident—that of William Prynne and Lord Bacon. Prynne published whole cartloads of books, while Bacon wrote but few. No one hesitates a moment in pronouncing the superior author, maybe never gave it a thought, and one can scarcely doubt whose writings cost the more labour and effort in preparation, composition, and production. The very multitudinous array of Prynne's works is a strong argument that the actual mental labour was merely nominal; the physical we do not doubt was almost infinite, unless he employed an amanuensis, but, as many of his books were useless, was misspent. In Bacon's works we are brought into contact with a stupendous genius, and in a moment we conclude that he must have expended enormous mental labour in their production, and that the preparation must have been tedious, profound, extensive, wearisome, far-reaching.

It has been remarked, and I think very shrewdly, that easy writing is hard reading. In a general sense it is pregnant with truth. There are exceptions, of course, as in the instance of genius being still more largely qualified by abundant preparation. No constant or consecutive array

of brilliant thoughts flash into an author's mind, and no really great books are written without an enormous pressure on the thinking faculty. Books do not grow on trees to be plucked as easily as apples. They are not found like lost property ; but are made, are beaten out of the human brain, literally torn out of the mind, and often at the cost of much physical weakness. The beautiful style of some of our best writers, which runs so smoothly, and not unfrequently ripples along as merrily as a summer stream with the golden sunlight dancing upon it—this delightful style is not always written with mechanical ease. There is labour and polish, polish and labour, in every line and word before it is brought to that final completion which satisfies the taste of the writer's mind. Words are selected with exquisite care, and periods pointed with delicate precision. Any reader acquainted with the biographical and critical history of our poets and authors will call to mind innumerable writers, famous for matter, method, or style, who wrote and re-wrote their elaborate works repeatedly. They have been condemned for their fastidiousness. Pope with his admirable system not the least. But few in our day will charge them with over-polish, or censure for fruitless labour, which fruitless labour—so-called—bore the fruit of many works, excellent in design,

perfect in structure, beautiful in finish, sublime in genius.

I am fully cognisant that this system of refining and embellishing may be carried to extreme, and even absurd limits, and develop into an artificial sentimentalism, which is a thousand times more degenerate than a rough exterior sound at the base. Many authors would appear of little account if stripped of their decent dress of passable language. There are but few who can dispense with a fine style altogether. Burns is always at his best when singing in his homely tongue. In that he has no equal. We also prefer Carlyle before Robertson; yet there is no comparison as to elegance of composition. What is the salvation of the latter would have been the death of the former. Carlyle with his native genius and large fiery heart could afford to discard style altogether. It was not necessary to him. His rough, rhapsodical manner of writing was sufficient for his pure, unselfish, and lofty purpose, indeed was the only 'fit' language in which to embody his burning hatred against all worthlessness, cant, trickery, shams, falsehood, and idleness. His mind would have appeared great and majestic in any dress, always excepting that of elegance or finery.

A beautiful, elaborate, or stately style of writing may cover a multitude of literary imperfections.

I always refuse to have my mind rocked into a soft sleep of indolence by a few silvery words, playing like scented fountains throughout the pages, when there is neither matter nor sense to recommend it. This mode of writing might be correctly termed *sham writing*, for certainly it is as useless as it is ignorant.

The great world groans beneath a mountain of sham labour. It confronts us everywhere. It is the monster of the age, as it has been of all ages. The intellectual, political, and constitutional strength of the nation is being sapped by it. We lose progress because so much labour is misspent. Many admirable men ruthlessly throw their finest energies away by not knowing how or in what direction to engage them most advantageously. Genius, confidence, vigour, courage, are far too self-supporting to prostitute their efforts in vain. A brave Sir Francis Drake, with a Spanish Armada in sight, can compel his bold colleagues to finish their game at bowls, because confident of their strength. 'Plenty of time to win the game and beat the Spaniards too.' Neither he nor the valiant men who afterwards destroyed the formidable Armada had any time or patience for works of supererogation. He could play, and he could fight, honourably and triumphantly, and no man knew better how to perform both judiciously and yet not waste

golden opportunities. Honest, manly labour, be it with the spade or the plough, is always superior in utility to infinite, superfluous work, even if employed in cultivating the fine arts. Death treads too closely on the heels of all humanity to dissipate the atom of days allowed in performing fruitless and unnecessary labour in this brother-trampling world. Every man has a capacity for producing something. Even idiots are not idle. They can draw, if only a square figure of the wooden-soldier species; still, there is the desire and endeavour to body forth the shape, form, and features of man, perhaps with the same spirit of a Raphael, a Correggio, a Rembrandt, or a Reynolds. Who knows? The way of the mind of man is mysterious, even if the Fates are unkind.

Dignity is not transgressed by honest labour, but rather superadded. If that fear deters any man from working with hand, mind, or pen, the sooner he flings his gentlemanly ideas to the four winds of heaven, or to the devil, to whom they properly belong, the better. He then would remain no longer a fool, at least on that point, but a God-created man, striving to attain the Godlike in nature and character. If poverty did but punish, labour would teach its own dignity and worth; but may Providence avert that bitter

lesson, even to all who would profit by its teaching. But, however much they are spared the penalties of an adverse life, Nature will assert her rights, and redress idlers, to their fearful dismay and irreparable loss.

THOROUGHNESS.

GOD send us thorough men in every state
And circumstance of life. The true desire
Freedom, kindness, justice, truth, and still higher—
Love of humankind, which will subdue—hate,
Crime, envy, folly, weakness in the gate
Of growing strength, and curb the surging fire
Of brutish passion. Further they require—
Those minds that will not sell their gifts by weight.

All classes suffer, and are weakened, sold,
Betrayed, and stabbed by vacillation, fear,
And want of honest courage. To be bold
Is to be free, if noble; all are near
Success when thorough. Right must not be rolled
In lame timidity to gain full cheer.

THOROUGHNESS.

Is it a world to hide virtues in?—SHAKESPEARE.

Then life is—to wake not sleep,
Rise and not rest, but press
From earth's level where blindly creep
Things perfected, more or less,
To the heaven's height, far and steep.—BROWNING.

I hold
That it becomes no man to nurse despair,
But in the teeth of clench'd antagonisms
To follow up the worthiest till he die.—TENNYSON.

ALL thorough men are generally great men—great in goodness or in crime. No weak man is ever thorough. His nature debars him. He has not sufficient courage to brace up his soul to the required strength of a noble, or an infamous action. He creeps, for he cannot climb; grovels, since he is afraid to mount; fawns, because awed by an ass's skin with a human tongue; whispers, and is hushed into timid silence by the sound of his own pitiful voice. This weak man is a very

wretched specimen of ideal manhood. We cannot help him for one very satisfactory reason, he cannot help himself.

So few men are thorough; many because of weakness, but many more because of circumstance. The followers of this latter order are time-servers. They must temporise, or become nothing. They are too alarmed for the safety of their position to stand upon the dignity of manhood. Justice and truth are alien sentiments to their method of existence. Nobility of character is of little account, so long as they feed upon the soft smiles of some creature in office, who they fancy is excellent and noble. If circumstances are altered, and occasion serves, they will readily reverse this benevolent judgment, call their former one hasty and mistaken, and henceforward think their patron a fool. They whine, 'We would follow you if we could; we dare not, for we cannot stifle conscience.' And then to themselves the genuine reason is whispered, 'We should lose favour, place, and position.' And whose favour would they lose? Perhaps the favour of a man who would find it easy to cast them aside as useless tools the moment they ceased to be of service. Favour, place, and position would all disappear as dew before the morning sun. Favour, forsooth! rather treachery, and treachery thrice distilled.

The history of our English court and parliamentary life, from the earliest authentic times, is one long record of unblushing, and often undisguised time-serving. It is significant, and indeed a bitter fact, that the generality of statesmen, from the Conqueror's advent downwards, have mostly served their own interests. I do not assert they have not served the nation. That would be an injustice to the brave, bold statesmen in the time of the Armada, the Civil War, and the Revolution. I assert that they did not forget *themselves*, and especially those temporisers of 1688.

Right down through the English centuries there is scarcely the smallest tithe of genuine thoroughness visible. Occasionally a man has been found impeccable, earnest, and pure, but at a great cost. Some have paid the penalty with their own lives, and others with the malignant scorn of men. Whatever may be said concerning the faults of Becket and Cardinal Wolsey, and especially of the latter's during the greater part of his career, it cannot be said that either were not thorough men. Their uncompromising attitude as magnificent ecclesiastics, when magnificent ecclesiastics were also statesmen, destroyed them. They were thorough when it was dangerous to be thorough. Becket perished before his own high altar by the weapons of courtly assassins; and

Wolsey probably escaped an ignominious death because Nature cheated the King, and delivered up the penitent Cardinal's soul into the hands of the Infinite All.

Henry II. was a king who exercised his royal prerogative in no timid manner ; but Becket, his chancellor-archbishop, was more than his equal when the Church and the ecclesiastical power were in danger of being reduced or weakened. The King held out long, manfully, perhaps perversely, certainly unwisely, against the haughty attitude and overbearing demands of the Church, as represented by Becket. But even Henry, a prince of bold metal and unflinching courage, was compelled to submit to his unbending archbishop in the end, in order to ensure the safety of his own throne. He had no other course, and was coerced into accepting a more limited kingly authority.

There was a remarkable inconsistency existing between Becket the chancellor and Becket the archbishop. Henry had even affectionately raised him to those exalted, dignified, and potent positions, little dreaming that his excellent and brilliant Thomas would become his tyrant, and virtually his king. When Chancellor he supported the King against the claims of the Church and Archbishop Theobald ; but when archbishop him-

self he found it politically convenient to forget his former antagonism, and forced the King with ecclesiastical weapons to bend his will before the authority of the Church, that its dignity might be maintained at any cost.

In his anger and indignation Becket refused to sign the King's 'Constitutions of Clarendon,' and it is doubtful if he ever did sign them. The archbishop was a thorough churchman before he was anything else, and his Church and her dignity were in danger, and her criminal clergy were, if the 'Constitutions of Clarendon' took effect, to be handed over to the civil power for judgment, and Becket was the last man to subjugate anyone, or anything belonging to the Church, to a court not ecclesiastical. So long as he could retain an independent ecclesiastical court, with full authority and jurisdiction over the Church and her clergy, he could shelter the latter from any crime, however flagrant, cruel, and bloody, so that the former should not suffer by terrible revelations.

Becket rose to his full height, and exercised his spiritual power to the utmost limits when the Court met at Northampton Castle, and he dared to enter it arrayed in his pontifical dress, with uplifted cross before him, appealing to the Papal authority as superior to the kingly. When Leicester, accompanied by Cornwall, was sent by the King and his

Court to deliver judgment on the archbishop, he arrogantly thrust the sentence down Leicester's throat unpronounced. When that nobleman reminded him that he was the 'king's man' and held his possessions as a 'fief' from him, Becket, with all the intense passion of his nature, and remembering his great office, replied that he held nothing whatever in 'fief,' and that the possessions of the Church were held in 'perpetual liberty' and not in subjection to any earthly sovereign whatever. Then, realising his lofty position of archbishop, and that by right of office he was head of the Church and sovereign to the King, he proceeded more arrogantly than before: 'I am your father, you princes of the palace, lay powers, secular persons; as gold is better than lead, so is the spiritual better than the lay power.' This exhibits the 'thorough' churchman—one who could neither be appalled or broken.

A spice of ecclesiastical power so determined, violent, even savage as this has rarely been exercised so successfully in its issues. The position Becket advanced, he defended and maintained, though it narrowed his liberty and enforced him into exile. Even in the court of a foreign prince he never abated one single point, or lessened the authority of the Church in the slightest degree. The great subject was potentially the king, and

the king the subject ; and in a few short years Henry was compelled, by the critical aspect of affairs, to recognise this unpalatable fact. His political position drove him into subjection. The 'Constitutions of Clarendon' were given up, and Becket had free licence and a safe-conduct to depart into England again, there to be reinstated in his possessions, with full ecclesiastical power granted him as before. The Archbishop's victory was complete. He won on all points, while the King gained nothing but a prospect of constitutional safety.

The large compliment paid to Becket by Henry, when holding his stirrup, was not altogether an idle one : 'It is fit the less should serve the greater.' Supported by the intolerable pride of his position, by his stupendous ecclesiastical authority, by force of circumstance and the more important force of genius, Becket was, indeed, the greater. If the King could have triumphed against such overwhelming odds he would have been more than human. It was not weakness, but necessity which conquered him. The ecclesiastical power was stronger than the kingly, the Church mightier than the constitution, and the subject loftier than his sovereign. Comprehending the situation of both, the problem was evolved as faithfully as one of Euclid's Elements.

I have particularly dwelt on Becket to illustrate the thorough churchman, when the Church had greater authority than it possesses now. Not that there are not other thorough churchmen in history, but that he was the most conspicuously and pertinaciously determined in thoroughness.

Sir Thomas More is another typical specimen of a thorough man, and one who even courageously suffered for his honest integrity. When walking in his garden with bluff King Hal, that puissant prince often entwined his arm about his neck, in token of affection, yet readily sent him to the block when he thwarted his purpose; and More as readily endured his sovereign displeasure.

But the pre-eminently thorough man in the history of the English nation is Oliver Cromwell. He takes precedence of all. Yet, until Carlyle so justly, admirably, and nobly vindicated his character, and showed us the man, perhaps, by general consent, he was considered the most infamous and defamed since Judas. If Carlyle had given us nothing more than the *Letters and Speeches* he would have rendered his name glorious and immortal to all lovers of liberty, truth, and justice. He deserves the thanks of all Englishmen who care for social and political freedom. Cromwell, Ireton, Hampden, and Pym were thorough, earnest, and constitutionally true

in an age when the words had lost their meaning, and England was rushing headlong to ruin. Cromwell saved his country—and our country—from kingly tyranny and oppression, and we applaud his vigour and reverence his memory. Carlyle had the courage and the common sense to paint us his real portrait, and we hold his name in perpetual honour. Biographer and subject both stand in the sunlight, and require the eulogy of no living man. Their works are seen, and their labours manifest. They need no national monument or Westminster tomb to immortalise their names, for they will never be forgotten so long as the earth is inhabited by mortal men.

There is one other prominently thorough man in English history—Macaulay's hero—William III. He was ready to buckle on his armour and do battle for the liberties of England when the time was clearly apparent, and did fight manfully for them, as we all know. That he had a secret longing for the great throne of our land was natural; that Parliament offered it to him jointly with his wife, Queen Mary, was honourable; and that he accepted it was just. There are few men, if any, who would quarrel with the settlement now. Jacobitism is dead, and England's liberties secure.

The reign of Queen Anne is celebrated by no really thorough man. Marlborough was so in his

brilliant battles, but no further, being inordinately avaricious and full of intrigue. It was an age when statesmen stooped to petty quarrels and private backstairs influence, with Harley for the prime mover. This nobleman's statesmanship was feeble, and his genius limited. If he had not been so fortunate as to enjoy the society and friendship of some of the brightest and best wits of his time, his name would be more forgotten than it is. Pope, Swift, Prior, Parnell, and Gay keep it honourably alive, while the political phase of his character condemns it. No honour could accrue to any of these men of letters, by being counted among his friends; the honour was rather reversed. It might accumulate money, but nothing higher or less interested. The pungent Swift knew perfectly where the honour lay when he insisted upon Harley going down through a crowd of courtiers in his ante-room, with his white staff in his hand, to meet Parnell the poet. It almost appears false pride on Swift's part, but it is honourable to him notwithstanding, and exhibits his ideas on the equality of statesmanship and letters in a very forcible manner. It is not the place, or the office of men of talent and genius to seek favour; it is their prerogative to be sought, and the 'mad parson' knew it. This fine feeling was always maintained. Harley had the good

sense to understand the position of his literary friends, or Pope would never have written those truly noble lines to him in his fall, which are to be found in that poet's dedication of Parnell's poems. The conduct was honourable, judicious, and praiseworthy on both sides.

None of them were overmuch in love with thoroughness. Perhaps Swift was the most so in his writings ; certainly not in his life. As a writer he carried off the palm in lashing the vices and follies of the age with his inimitable satire, which, if somewhat coarse and derogatory to human nature, was nevertheless keen, biting, and stung where he intended. *Gulliver's Travels* is not only an admirable book for children, and mankind in general, but is peculiarly adapted for those who presume to call themselves statesmen and legislators. The *Tale of a Tub* is also an excellent work for argumentative and bigoted ecclesiastics. It is usual for them to censure it for its seeming irreverence, when all the time it is its sharp and critical home-thrusts which annoy.

Gay also was no laggard with his satirical pen. In his *Beggar's Opera* and *Fables* all classes were charged with their vices, in a veiled manner, but none the less deliberate and understood. Politicians were especially singled out, and Walpole in particular, for his satire. But whether that

statesman was satirised from a genuine love of truth and justice, or whether his swift shafts were the spleen of a disappointed courtier is, perhaps, difficult, if not hazardous, to positively asseverate, although I am afraid we must decide in favour of the latter. Still, no matter the judgment, friendly or adverse, if one really wishes to understand the critical art of laying bare and holding up vice and folly to scorn, in a polished and vigorous manner, or to draw general maxims of life, he cannot do better than read the *Fables* by John Gay. There will be no necessity to be delicate in selection; they are all valuable, and particularly those comprising the first part. Gay will always repay for a re-perusal. He is always intelligent, witty, and wise; never dull, and seldom dependent upon another for his thoughts, or his method of expressing them.

It is rarely we meet with high and noble conduct in any great man for a lengthened period. There is always some vile trait, or worthless action, cropping up to damp our admiration. We may fasten upon a certain magnificent passage in a man's public life, and become so warm in our praises, that we readily forget that other passage which is damnable to his private character. All Englishmen are proud of the public conduct of Nelson but they are few who do not wish certain

phases in his private history blotted out. He was one of the most thorough men of his time, and, without paradox, one of the weakest.

England has never been honoured, or even revolutionised by an age of thoroughness. There have always been thorough men, but never a thorough nation, unless we except the time when the English people were expecting the Spanish Armada, and the period when they were anxiously awaiting the hostile visitation of Bonaparte. Certainly the revolution under Cromwell, and that under the Prince of Orange, were not accomplished by a thorough nation, but by thorough men. The people were divided, but the division was often of the weakest kind.

At the time of the Armada the English nation, as a whole, was ready to bar the progress of the hated Spaniards, to hurl them into the chasm of death, or thrust them back into their own Spanish seas, if, indeed, they could have reached them in safety with a brave and enraged fleet in their train. Almost the same enthusiasm was excited when Napoleon was expected. All were eager to lend a hand to crush him as the devil incarnate, should he approach the English or Scottish shores.

At this time the brilliant William Pitt was the very acme of thoroughness. He was as willing to

do battle with 'Bony' as he was to guide the ship of state through the stormy seas of his time. Nothing comes amiss to a great man. He could front and vanquish a strong opposition as easily as he could equip and exercise a band of volunteers. When fighting became necessary Pitt was already prepared. His portraits show lofty scorn for all scoundrelism and inanity, they display firmness, haughtiness, love for truth, and rigid scrupulosity. If Napoleon had landed, Pitt would have been foremost in confronting him, and his eager spirit and carelessness of danger would have justified his ambition.

The thorough man is always an active man, a courageous man, a man of honest, determined principle and wholesome breadth of soul. Carlyle's mere *clothes-man* is never thorough but in the cut and colour of his coat and pantaloons. I do not say the clothes-man cannot be great, or honourably famous. Goldsmith refutes this, and Beaconsfield also. This worthy statesman, with his inordinate love for the silks and satins of his youth, and the velvets of his maturer years, found time to be ambitious, and also to be great. But Beaconsfield was never Carlyle's *mere* clothes-man, with a vacant mind, a withered heart, and an inane sort of smile. He was a clothes-man, as we all know, but he was a tremendous something more—a genuine states-

man. This is significant to the zealous student of history, men, and manners. It is not altogether fruitless to learn that he was an omnivorous lover of a fine-clothes appearance, and that he delivered his famous sentence, now historical, in the House of Commons in a rich, conspicuous dress, which would have turned Goldsmith's soul green with envy. And who now wishes Disraeli otherwise? His admirers love his characteristics as fondly as a mother her first-born, and would thunder your censures down as loudly as Samuel Johnson.

A thorough man is always a man of principle. He is safe at all times. Whatever duty lays before him he does not shirk it like an idle man, but honestly performs it as a virtuous one. It is even better to be thorough than great, for greatness is often shackled with many weaknesses and unlovely vices. The moral character is frequently awry, and requires re-adjustment; but a thorough man is usually more consistent in his life as a whole. There is unity; each phase agreeing with the other, that there is little or no necessity for the whipping-post.

The world is held together by thoroughness, by men of firm stamina, by men who are thorough in their greatness, and great in their thoroughness. They are its navigators and saviours, who follow in admirable order to preserve it from falling into

confusion, anarchy, and ruin. Probably the French Revolution would have been entirely different in its evolution and effects had the lion-hearted Mirabeau stood at the helm instead of the 'sea-green' Robespierre. Alas! an early death, as from the gods, visited the former and hurried him from the face and the blood of his countrymen; while the latter was permitted free licence for a space, in which to lend the Revolution some of its deadliest throes. The gods did not visit *him*, but the Furies; a broken jaw and a bloody death by his favourite guillotine. This hideous annihilator is really a divine institution for hypocrites and rogues, and is a soothing antidote for revolutionary mountebanks who reach their platform through seas of human blood.

A good man loves order, an earnest man seeks for it, but a thorough man insists upon it. He sacrifices all for his ideal; and, as a brave man plunges into danger to save a fellow-creature, so he confronts unpopularity, indignation, and scorn to ensure victory to his cause. So long as his conceived duty remains undone and incomplete, so long is the Bruce's heart in the hands of the enemy. It must be recovered, or eternal shame will rest upon his brow.

Does the thorough man perish or spend his life for his ideal in vain? Rarely. For his determined soul

is cased in steel. He can face all odds and still conquer. Yet, with all his determination, energy and vigour, he is as gentle as a maiden of the Middle Ages who, with trembling fingers, buckled on the armour of her cherished knight. He can kiss his little child with more than a woman's tenderness ; he can love, and be beloved, and still stand invincible and strong. Is he a good old Samuel Johnson, he will lift a destitute woman from the gutter, and carry her home on his back. The cynical ask if he carried her pick-a-back, or invented a temporary side-saddle for that occasion only. The great man and his burden may appear a ludicrous exhibition in Boswell, or out of it, but it was a noble one in reality. Men scarcely understand the fine old moral man of letters and overbearing conversationalist, when they call him rough, rude, unmannerly, and a brute. True, he could scorn an Earl of Chesterfield ; but had he not pensioners alway in his house, and the poor at his door ? They never met with coldness or contempt. To the ordinary eye he may have appeared unpolished, and even savage ; but penetrate into his inner being. No nobler heart ever beat in a human breast, and none more affectionate and kind.

Humanely, Carlyle was very similar to Johnson ; but as a man of letters he is greater. His thoroughness has become a proverb. He has no equal in

history. Who hated shams so intensely as he? or wrote against them with so great a degree of vigour, or with an 'honest' purpose? His whole attitude throughout his life was thoroughly earnest, and his deep soul was aflame with sublime indignation against smooth unrealities and hideous 'make-believes.' As the rugged prophet of the century he stands alone in his supremacy. It is a proud position, but an honest one. His worthiest praise is, that he deserves it. The same may be said of all thorough men. He who is deserving is the greatest, the noblest, and the best. Thoroughness is the life-blood of humanity, and its just utility one of the highest duties of man.

COOKERY.

O POTENT force of modern days ; ye god
Of devildom, and angel of the mind,
And soul, and body. Your false minions grind
The strength of men to dust and churchyard sod ;
And sour their tempers as they hourly plod—
'Gainst shocks and storms, and blasts of scornful wind,
To gain the sustenance which kills, thro' blind
And wanton fools, with beauteous sense unshod.

'Tis double pain when pleasure is undone,
And rendered treacherous by its own device ;
'Tis monstrous crime when duty has her sun
O'erclouded by the ignorance of a vice ;
But 'tis immortal shame that men are won
And tortured by the hand that should be nice.

COOKERY.

God sends meat, and the Devil sends cooks
AN OLD PROVERB.

Rupest of barbarous devices is English cookery.
DE QUINCEY.

Not on Morality, but on Cookery, let us build our stronghold ; there brandishing our frying-pan, as censer, let us offer sweet incense to the Devil, and live at ease on the fat things *he* has provided for his Elect.—CARLYLE.

IT is not my intention to enter into the technicalities of cookery, so any one expecting a dissertation on cooking a potato, or grilling a mutton-chop, may close the book straightway. I have no desire to excite the ghostly shade of Soyer to envy, and shall offer no new recipes to throw any living epicure into a transport of delight. There are cookery books without number, and if they are not to be relied on they are like many other books professing to teach, and therefore form no exception. If you want learning in any department of philosophy, science, or litera-

ture, you must dig, and delve, and sink shafts in every possible direction, with your own hand or brain, till you find it. You will not discover it in one quarter, but in a hundred, and brave endeavours must be made to assimilate this widespread knowledge into a closer and more useful compass. The cookery book is overloaded with *take another way*, yet that way is never the simple or the right way, but only serves to multiply confusion and error. Having stated this, to cookery books I bid a long adieu.

Cookery—that of the righteous kind—is the mainstay of our existence. It is an old observation that the way to a man's heart is through his stomach. Its frequent fulfilment renders the paradox only too true. A woman understands its weight as much as the statesman. Cookery is utilised by both with excellent effect, and for very obvious reasons—to gain a desired end. A good dinner conciliates the estranged, softens the churlish, ensnares the innocent, subdues the enemy, deceives the crafty, disarms the strong, and, what is of momentous importance in the domestic circle, it often hastens the proposal of the lover, for which all are waiting with breathless anxiety. If it did nothing else but this last piece of service, it would render the belly-god the very Jove of supremacy and the governor of Cupid. A lover brought to

his knees in the back drawing-room, the conservatory, or, maybe on the stairs—for no place is sacred to undeclared love striving for utterance—is the good housewife's victory wrought by her dinner. These are her laurels, and she wears them proudly. If in her triumph her heart beats so violently that it is in danger of bursting through her bosom, has it not sufficient cause to justify its thumping madness of delight? She is complimented by all, and is as self-satisfied and happy as though her own dear husband, with whom she has been living in wedded bliss these twenty years, had proposed over again. The cost of the dinner is forgotten, as is right; she is only thinking of the happiness of her dark-eyed daughter, and is already deep in that absorbing subject—so fascinating to all women—the trousseau. It has been revolving in her mind for weeks. Every item has been carefully registered in her private note-book; and, now that Reg has actually proposed, the trousseau must in all justice overwhelm and crush every other topic in yards of lace, dozens of hats, heaps of dresses, and a mountain of endless necessities the bride always requires, yet never feels the want of prior to this important event. It is a glorious season for the mother's heart, and all won by a good dinner. But the handsome Reg swears, in an undertone to himself, that it was

Dolly's matchless eyes and naughty tempting lips that conquered him, and not the fine turbot to which he was so partial. All seem satisfied, so it is not necessary to swear anyway, or anything, but eternal constancy and deathless love, which appears to be the happy Dolly's prime source of pleasure and delight. She does not care for the cost of the famous dinner; its goodness or its badness is nothing to her. All she feels is that she is drowned in eddies of love, is tossed in a whirlpool of happiness, and that dear Reg is henceforth her very own. She repeats the words a thousand times when alone in her chamber, but they lose nothing by repetition; they are ever sweet, and are always new.

A good dinner must never be condemned. It is a wonderful piece of artillery. It seldom fails in its object, and plays havoc all round. Sometimes it is impregnated and prostituted by one grievous failing—the wine. The desired prey has been captured by the good dinner, and then recaptured by the generous plenty of the better wine. But these are isolated cases; for Venus exercises greater power than Bacchus, although, when the game is worthless, the purple god is frequently the victor. These two divinities are too potent and wise to labour antagonistically to one another. One of their favourite methods is to proceed hand

in hand, indeed, till the beginning of the present century, it was almost their only method. But of late years the beautiful Venus has become rather ashamed of her red-nosed but jolly old friend Bacchus, and is on the point of discarding him. She well knows that he always stands ready to return when necessary, for he bears no offence, and is neither insolent nor surly. Venus may banish him repeatedly, but, at a single glance of her enchanting eye, he will as repeatedly rush to her assistance. Love is powerful, and all must rejoice that it has become purer, less indecorous, and more sober. This more temperate state is better for England, is the preservation of her people, and is honourable and praiseworthy to individuals. William Pitt attempting to deliver a speech in the House of Commons when inebriated, and Garrick essaying to act in same condition, are pitiful memories of these famous men. The nineteenth century must always be complimented for being the first to make a vigorous stand against intemperance, and calling it by its true name—vice. England is not only ashamed but weary of the rollicking drinking bouts of past times. So long as the crusade against intemperance did not develop into downright fanaticism, and, even, idiotcy, as it has done of late years, all was well; but now reasonable men can say but little for it. If England as

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a nation can be made temperate it is not by beating of drums, flaunting of flags, breaking of wind-pipes, and consigning drunkards to a literal hell-fire, but by a gentler method, which so many self-sacrificing and noble women know so well how to employ. There are many other admirable, quiet, and intelligent systems of course, still, as I am not a temperance apostle, but in the present paper an essayist on cookery, it would be entirely out of my province to descant upon any one of them, further than the above, which is akin to my dissertation.

It will not be foreign in an article of this description to point out that one of the great causes of intemperance is bad cookery. Many hogsheads of alcohol are swallowed daily in England alone, to repair the damage engendered by ill-cooked food. Indigestion is a national curse; and it is well known that brandy is the national cure. The small medicinal dose leads to one which is not medicinal. Indigestion often plays greater ravages as the brandy is increased in quantity. The patient imbibes the fiery spirit with a keener zest, and, if the owner of a weak mind, sinks under the table, and the citadel is gained. Certainly he makes himself a beast, but he is to be pitied, not howled at like an unnatural monster. Bad cookery is the arch-fiend that introduced a thousand cruel devils into his stomach; and what wonder if, when

endeavouring to slay them, he roused a thousand more? Patients are not always infallible any more than their doctors. Both are mortals, and if pain discovers itself in an exquisite manner, men of fortitude are often the first to exhibit signs of weakness, and to rave like madmen.

Cooking plays a great part in social and domestic life; perhaps, none the less, in some other phases, when there is to be something gained, or at least attempted. It is no wide leap from the dining-room to the charitable platform, for they are both closely connected. It is in the benevolent dining-room, where the tremendous engine of cookery is manipulated with extraordinary effect. The wise prophets of charity generally provide a good dinner, at the consumer's cost, of course, when they are agitating for large donations. They perfectly understand that the pockets are more easily reached, fathomed, and emptied, if the attempt is made through the stomach, and not through the head. The latter thinks and calculates, the former only knows it has been abundantly satisfied, and feels comfortable with all the world.

It is not the bellowing voice of some canting speaker, who imagines himself a second Demosthenes, that fills the money-bags, but the agreeable dinner which preceded him. If he had only

the good sense to comprehend that, he would flatter himself less, and praise the shrewdness of some intelligent men more. Unfortunately, both for himself and his audience, and sometimes the charitable institution he is seeking to befriend, he has no insight, comprehension, good sense, or any other reasonable faculty. He possesses one common gift, that of distending his jaws to their imminent danger of dislocation, thus enlarging his mouth which was already more than large enough. It enables him to increase the volume of his ranting speech, an hour long, which he delivers amid the thundering applause of his idolaters, and to the amusement, but often disgust of those who love Carlyle's cardinal maxim—*Clear your mind of cant.*

The pet phrases of this class of mud-orators are: 'I have their interest at heart,' 'The forsaken outcast,' 'The suffering poor,' 'The pitiful orphans,' 'Our great work of rescue,' and 'The urgent need of funds to continue this labour of love.' These stereotyped idioms, and many closely analogous, are the burden of most speeches of the drivelling kind; but they are rarely met with in the speeches, sermons, or disquisitions of men with lofty, noble, and truly generous minds and liberal hearts; men who, in common respect for themselves and their hearers, refuse to stoop to the manufactured language of the stump-orator.

If a man cannot make a speech without padding it with overworn terms and wretched inanities, till it is as bloated as any toad and as useless, he had far better allow the charitable institution to take care of itself, or make one glorious effort, and then, like single-speech Hamilton, rest on his laurels. The majority of his audience would feel relieved, even favoured, and perhaps give more beneficently, did the speaker of this stamp—and there are many—confine himself to help eating the dinner and swelling the bag. He would be useful in both positions, and would undoubtedly, considering all things, grace them in a superior manner. Anyhow, an intolerable nuisance would be removed, and a hundred or a thousand people would no longer be inflicted with his empty jargon.

A bad speaker, following a good dinner, is abominable. He will do as much toward counter-acting its generous influences as a bad preacher will do toward emptying a formerly well-filled church, or a bad actor a crowded theatre. A good dinner ushers a man into a blissful state of contentment and peace. For a few minutes he can even endure a lame after-dinner speaker—and diners-out have listened to many since Adam and Eve dined on their first apple and found the after-taste bitter—but to be punished for an hour's duration is unendurable.

The bray of many public platforms is not one whit superior to Hyde Park oratory. It may be more respectable and refined, but not half so original and vigorous. The style and manner of both are to be condemned, but not the matter. It is *that* which is twisted out of shape, and abused almost beyond recognition, by the insane handling of the speaker. The gods love beauty, and so do men. Nature teaches and provides us with myriads of glorious tints; these wretched platform orators never. Nothing is so fair and beautiful as charity; yet nothing is marred and mutilated so much by its teachers and apostles. All will agree with me that a good dinner is better than a bad speech, and that were both on an equality much more satisfactory results might be attained for sweet charity's sake. When unequally balanced, charity is smothered at her birth by a rash, senseless torrent of words, belowed forth by a man whose place in Nature is not to the credit of mankind.

We do not know what we suffer, or what diseases we generate by inferior cooking. This windy gesticulating, after-dinner speaker's flight of unendurable sentences may be caused by Trotty Veck's great source of evil—being 'born bad'—an insufficient training, or, to press more closely, a fit of indigestion. His wordy inflation

may be nothing more dangerous than a bottle of *Mumm's*, or possibly an imperial *Bass* defying all stomachic arrangements; both will insist upon their own wilfulness, as kingly liquors should. A prerogative must be maintained at all cost, or at any sacrifice, even to playing havoc with that very delicate mechanism, a human stomach, no matter if distended to the genuine aldermanic dimensions, or reduced to the critical thinness of the English Opium-Eater's. A stomach must be fed to preserve mortality, and if by bad cookery rebellion will break out, a rebellion which will require all the tact, courage, wisdom, energy of an Oliver Cromwell, or a Prince of Orange to subdue. For does not bad cookery, by its effects, hail from the very confines of hell, and do not its excruciating tortures translate one temporarily to that terrible place of anguish and devildom? A wise sage, not long since, firmly believed that bad cooks were the devil's minions, his angels and servants despatched to earth expressly to disorder and torment his very sensitive stomach. And there are others, who are not sages but ordinary mortals with their digestive apparatus out of repair, who are urged to this extreme conviction which, on reflection, is not altogether so unwarrantable as it first appears. For why should any cook, black or white, male or female, exist

solely to serve up agonies on a dish loaded with some vile compound of bad cookery, and particularly to sages, whose countenances already present more than enough of misery, sadness, and despair? Ordinary mortals can endure almost anything but the toothache, but sages cannot, dare not. Look on their portraits and tell me if they do not appear as though tormented with ten thousand devils in a silent, uncomplaining manner, each one endeavouring to bear his cruel treatment as a martyr; and despicable cookery has to answer for much of this saddening of the 'human face divine' to something which appears marvellously undivine? Oh! pitiful cookery weep and amend your ways, that the wise ones of the earth do not descend into Dante's hell with countenances sadder than his own.

A good cook is an angel; no matter if she is blind of one eye, minus three front teeth, or suffers from a purplish complexion, she is still an angel—Matthew Arnold would have added—of 'sweetness and light,' and thousands of miserable stomachic sufferers would have applauded the sentiment. The man or woman who can serve up clean, digestible food is deserving of any reasonable or unreasonable title. There is more disease engendered, more affliction manufactured, more agony tolerated, more tempers soured by bad

cooks, than any other common evil whatever, or any two common evils combined. Most of the excruciating torment culminating in the human digestive organs emanates from these fire worshippers, these spoilers of food, ruiners of stomachs, and devil incense burners. Their execrable cookery is the instrument of torture, with the latest improvements; and the dining-room, or banqueting-hall, the chamber of torments, where tender stomachs are racked with pain, and innocent mouths are full of censure, not devoid of melody, since the air is set in D sharp.

Whether a dinner is good, bad, or indifferent it has a tremendous power any way. It is uncontrollable, and will exercise influence somewhere. It is a wonderful engine in skilful hands, whether for state policy or petty-state policy. Mrs Howard, afterwards the Countess of Suffolk, knew its force, and was not slow, timid, or even selfish, to avail herself of it. When wishing to push her way at the Court of Hanover, eventually to become the Court of England, did she not, being poor, cut off her beautiful hair, dispose of it for twenty pounds, give a dinner to the right parties, and partially gain her object? Whether to be mistress to a stupid George II., or lady-in-waiting to his petty theological Queen, were positions worth the struggling, no matter; she utilised her dinner to

carve her way to fancied honour, and succeeded in obtaining places that many sighed for in vain, and what many possessing would have wished to resign, but for the loss of power, which was always more imaginary than real. Doubtless her dinner was an excellent one. No woman, brandishing a dinner as her only weapon, would brandish a bad one. We may rest certain that it was selected with thoughtful care, cooked with exquisite taste, served up in a superb fashion, eaten with infinite relish, and digested with an easy unconcern.

Not one of the Lord Mayor's banquets, with an endless array of indigestibles, could surpass this dinner of Mrs Howard's for state-craft. A woman with her ingenuity was worthy of a higher position than mistress to a sensual George II. With her display of social wisdom she was rather more fitted to be wived to a king ruling rebellious subjects, that when the sceptre failed, the knife and fork might win. She would have quelled their rebel intentions, twisted their arguments round her finger, and foiled the most crafty. The dinner would conquer all. Unhappy woman, even with a Dean Swift to indite love-letters to her in his coarse but inimitable style, she deserved a better fate! Good dinners may purchase many things, but not all things, or her life would have been brighter, happier, purer, nobler.

There are many things more lofty in their aim than Mrs Howard's Hanover dinner, but few wiser. The world is surfeited with fools who eat and endeavour to digest worse dinners every day. There are dinners social, political, and state. There are many more of all kinds, but none in the entire realm of dining so crafty as the political or state dinner. It is there where the spider and the fly tragedy is enacted over again, and often, but not lately, with more cruel results. That old Norse king Olaf understood the importance of a state dinner when he compelled his nobles to suffer baptism afterwards, or endure the terrible alternative of death, which none courted but in the battle, bloody and grim. Olaf would not have allowed time for a fit of indigestion. It would have been a laughable plea to him—'Plenty of time for digestion when your heads are off, my good fellows. Make up your minds swiftly, for the axe is as ready as the holy water, and I am in no humour to wait.' After this tyrannical manner did the old Norse king coerce his point, and, doubtless, the majority of those baptised subjects lived to eat many more dinners, and to rail against indigestion right heartily afterwards.

However that may be, Carlyle's maxim stands firm. It is as essential to our common weal to insist upon good cookery as upon a high-toned

morality, since the first is the vitality and life-blood of the latter. That no useful morality can ensue without good cookery is an axiom as true and incontrovertible as a natural law, and infinitely more so than a parliamentary one. A prodigious amount of evil would be avoided, and many round but fashionable oaths would remain unspoken, if much of our national bad cookery had remained uncooked—nothing more substantial than a non-entity—never to have tortured a human stomach, never to have loosened a mortal tongue. Better no cookery, and feed on anything after the manner of savages, than bad cookery ; one can be endured, the other never. But better, far better, bad cookery than a surfeit. A man who exists but to gorge reduces his noble manhood to filthy pignood ; and indeed cannot, in justice to his fellow-pigs of the pound, and superior mortals of the dining-room, insist upon a higher place. He has forever renounced his humanity, severed his connection, and thrown off his allegiance with mankind, and is nothing more than a groveller, a polite beast, and a belly-god.

Henry I., dying of a surfeit of lampreys, is not a matter of pity and sorrow, but a subject of loathing and disgust. His proper throne was not in Westminster Abbey, but in the forest, and his subjects the boars he hunted and speared. The

working man in his humble cottage, eating with his wife and children the bread he has so honestly and laboriously purchased, is more kingly in his honourable poverty than the glutton, be he aristocrat, prince, or king. There is an epic poem laying silently but eloquently in the home of the former, but nothing sweeter than two lines of abominable sarcasm in the mansions of the latter. It is unpromising and thankless to make comparisons, but it is just, when the truth is so manifest. With bad cookery banished, and belly-gods suffocated by their own despicable habits of gluttony, we might have some larger hope for the sweet influence of the banquet or dinner-table. The devil reigns with his tridantic toasting-fork for sceptre, and to all appearance few or none are seeking for his dethronement. Meanwhile innumerable stomachs suffer, indigestion abounds, health is undermined, constitutions grow weak, and tempers falter. Good cookery waits patiently with her stewpan, and is our better angel. She waits. How long? Ah, how long?

EPILOGUE.

FAREWELL my little book : I leave you now
To battle with the Furies and the Fates ;
The Gods and Fairies ; rising loves and hates ;
But hope no man will curse me, or will vow
Eternal censure ; for my soul doth bow
To noble manhood, and doth love the gates
Of Knowledge, Truth, and Excellence ; and waits
On godlike Wisdom with an open brow.

And I have wrought my vision with such skill
As Art and Nature gave ; and with firm trust
In purpose ; for my mind did but fulfil
Its apprehension, and rose not with gust
Of vain ambition :—Thus I claim you still,
But give you to the judgment of the just.

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